WHAT DOES SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY MEAN? ......................................................

Social sustainability is grounded in the concept that social and cultural systems need to provide ways for people to live together peacefully, equitably and with respect for human rights and dignity. It is the underlying belief that people should have their basic needs satisfied in a fair and equitable manner.

Social sustainability promotes social interaction and cultural enrichment. It is related to how we make choices that affect other humans in our community.

OBJECTIVES OF SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY.............................................

- To provide a quality lifestyle for residents, where health and wellbeing are improving over time.
- To protect and enhance the overall character, identity and liveability of the local communities.
- To provide equitable access to services and facilities for existing and future residents.

SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES ............

Coffs Harbour City Council has identified a number of social issues that need addressing in the OLC Settlement Strategy.

These are itemised in the diagram (below), and are categorised generally under the following three headings:

- Health;
- Liveability; and
- Access.

The following section of the document explores each of the social sustainability issues identified by Council under these broad categories as being pertinent to the OLC Settlement Strategy.

Key social considerations for the Coffs Harbour Local Government Area (LGA) are shown on the map (left).
HEALTH

COMMUNITY SAFETY

How can we improve health and safety?

Local government has a central role in promoting and developing strategies that enhance community safety and well-being.

In Coffs Harbour LGA there are a number of matters that Council needs to address for long-term community safety. These include road safety, beach and watercraft safety, natural hazards, community safety, risk management, and design of buildings and the built environment to both reduce opportunities for crime and to enhance citizen feelings of safety or perceived safety.

Issues of public health (such as food and water) are addressed separately.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BACKGROUND</th>
<th>ISSUES</th>
<th>STRATEGIC ACTIONS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Road Safety. With Coffs Harbour’s current development pattern of north/south movements along the Pacific Highway, and high reliance on the private car, road safety issues include safety for pedestrians and cyclists, heavy and hazardous vehicles in residential areas, and traffic accidents generally.</td>
<td>Continue implementing Council’s Road Safety Plan.</td>
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<td>Beach and Watercraft Safety. Many of the new development areas in the Coffs Harbour LGA will be developed near our beaches. This poses issues of safety for beach users, both at existing and new development locations. Recreation involving watercraft is on the increase. Council needs to monitor risks and respond to emergencies, particularly in relation to boat ramps and signage.</td>
<td>Reduce the need for multiple daily north/south movements along the Pacific Highway by improved settlement patterns.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Risk Management. Council needs to consider a number of matters (including sun safety, lighting, safe design principles, and even health of buildings) in development proposals and plans of management. This will assist to ensure public safety in terms of accident risk, healthy work and living environments and crime.</td>
<td>Establish a road hierarchy pattern to remove hazardous and heavy vehicles from residential areas.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Natural Hazards. Members of our community may not be aware of hazards that may occur where they live (such as cyclone, bushfire, coastal processes, flooding and climatic change).</td>
<td>Undertake a review of beach and craft safety and user needs.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Community Safety. Council’s libraries provide safe and supervised community spaces with extended opening hours in Coffs Harbour’s main population centres.</td>
<td>Review beach safety services in all areas and establish a high standard of beach facilities at safe locations along the coast.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Continue implementing Council’s Road Safety Plan.</td>
<td>Develop a Risk Assessment Checklist for all plans of management and development and planning proposals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reduce the need for multiple daily north/south movements along the Pacific Highway by improved settlement patterns.</td>
<td>Prepare a Community Safety Plan to identify and analyse the community safety needs and priorities of the Coffs Harbour LGA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Establish a road hierarchy pattern to remove hazardous and heavy vehicles from residential areas.</td>
<td>Prepare “Safer by Design” guidelines and information sheets to assist developers and Council with all development proposals.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Undertake a review of beach and craft safety and user needs.</td>
<td>Train relevant Council staff in “Safer by Design” principles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review beach safety services in all areas and establish a high standard of beach facilities at safe locations along the coast.</td>
<td>Design public places that are flexible and can accommodate a wide range of users.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop a Risk Assessment Checklist for all plans of management and development and planning proposals.</td>
<td>Plan for the widest possible mix of uses in the city centre to promote vitality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prepare a Community Safety Plan to identify and analyse the community safety needs and priorities of the Coffs Harbour LGA.</td>
<td>Provide public education via Council website and media of hazards relating to individual locations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prepare “Safer by Design” guidelines and information sheets to assist developers and Council with all development proposals.</td>
<td>Test existing controls against the latest science to ensure hazards are adequately addressed in Council policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Train relevant Council staff in “Safer by Design” principles.</td>
<td>Notify landowners via Section 149 planning certificates of natural hazards which may occur in certain locations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

BACKGROUND

All people should have the maximum opportunity to genuinely participate in decisions that drive community outcomes. This is associated with creating healthy communities – in terms of empowering people to have ownership over decisions that are made that affect their lives.

Increased community involvement can bring people together and better establish a sense of place and identity. This section is closely aligned with the “Creating Communities” section.

ISSUES

- The Coffs Harbour LGA has been broken into 14 localities. These are either centred around an existing urban or village core, or a traditional locality acknowledged locally.
- Council is eager to promote a two-way flow of views and information, generally with a focus on decision making, for both overall Council policy, as well as for individual communities.
- The aim is to design communities that are able to communicate and engage discussion within themselves without the need for Council to continually manufacture and bolster such communication.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- Work with the community to create local identity for individual localities.
- Develop place management actions to engage the local community.
- Seek community involvement in Council projects.
- Prepare a policy on public relations / community involvement.
- Create meeting places in local communities.
- Provide infrastructure to assist in the exchange of ideas and information within the community.
- Consider further development in local public libraries with regard to space, location and opening hours to assist in improving the spaces as community meeting places.
## PUBLIC HEALTH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BACKGROUND</th>
<th>ISSUES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local government has a central role in promoting and developing strategies that ensure ongoing good health for the population.</td>
<td>Council is eager to explore measures to attract and retain doctors and specialists to the region.</td>
<td>Consult with the NSW Department of Health (DoH) regarding possibilities in attracting doctors and services to the Coffs Harbour LGA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Coffs Harbour LGA there are a number of public health matters that Council needs to address and regulate. For example, these include regulating food outlets, restricting developments that would create insect issues, providing for waste disposal, addressing tropical disease issues, and keeping drinking water free of pollutants.</td>
<td>The state of the local environment is also a key issue in public and mental health – provision of clean air, sufficient open space, etc.</td>
<td>Engage with the NSW DoH to ensure provision of zoned land over time as the need arises.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The harmful health and social consequences of drug and excessive alcohol use are well documented. Council is eager to assist in addressing these issues as they arise.</td>
<td>The Coffs Harbour Community Crime Prevention Plan 2001 identified alcohol and other drugs as a priority crime issue in the Coffs Harbour LGA.</td>
<td>Engage with the NSW DoH to encourage and support continued expansion of the Coffs Harbour Health Campus, of private hospital facilities and for state of the art diagnostic services in the Coffs Harbour LGA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As with other areas in NSW, the availability of doctors and specialists in the locality is an ongoing issue of concern, especially as our population ages.</td>
<td>There is a need to understand the breakdown of community groups and to plan facilities to meet these needs.</td>
<td>Assist the NSW DoH to locate upgraded medical facilities and centres in Woolgoolga and Sawtell/ Toormina areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a growing phenomena Australian wide of post natal depression and isolation experienced by young mums in outer urban growth corridors where high proportions of the population are young children and young families.</td>
<td>Consult with the NSW DoH regarding possibilities in attracting doctors and services to the Coffs Harbour LGA.</td>
<td>Undertake ongoing research on health issues relevant to the Coffs Harbour LGA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Provide information to assist in the provision of access to alcohol and drug treatment services.</td>
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<td>Plan for small cohesive communities with their own focus on meeting places, so social activities are provided in local areas.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Investigate provision of an enabling clause in Coffs Harbour Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2000, to allow the provision of medical consulting rooms in residential zoned areas.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**BASIC INFRASTRUCTURE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</table>
| Coffs Harbour has a history of development being delayed by the lack of available services to land zoned for residential development. | - Land should not be released without the ability to supply sewer and water services.  
- It is uneconomical to provide sewer in rural and rural residential areas.  
- Rural residential development is wasteful in terms of use of land and provision of services, and should be strategically planned. | - Implement Council’s Water and Sewer Strategy.  
- Only release land in new urban areas where appropriate infrastructure is to be provided.  
- Review the overall impacts of rural residential development, and determine whether this type of development should continue to be made available in new release areas.  
- Investigate alternative technology over time. |
HEALTH

How can we improve health and safety?

CRIME

BACKGROUND

Crime rates provide insight into the present health of our community – reflecting how safe citizens are in their homes and on the streets, and what portions of the resources of the Coffs Harbour LGA are spent remedying the effects of crime.

Elevated levels of crime can have a negative effect on all aspects of urban life – both in resources used and in overall community spirit. There are economic and health linkages such as health care costs, distribution of personal income, and housing affordability.

Coffs Harbour has two crime ‘hotspots’ – these are the Coffs Harbour Central Business District (CBD) and Park Beach.

Crime statistics have been provided by the NSW Police Service for the Coffs Harbour City area (not including Woolgoolga and Sawtell). These August 2004 statistics show a substantial decrease in assaults, and break, enter and steal incidents between 2001 and 2003.

Domestic violence is another crime area of interest to Council. In any sustainable community, levels of domestic violence need to be reduced.

Any strategy for preventing violence must include education to replace deeply ingrained attitudes, beliefs and behaviour that condones and perpetuates domestic violence with beliefs that promote safety, justice and equality for women and girls.

ISSUES

- Coffs Harbour CBD. Most break and enters here were committed on business / commercial premises. There has been a significant decrease in the number of assaults here, attributed to the redesign of the CBD.
- Park Beach. There has been a significant decrease in the number of break and enter incidents (these occur mainly in accommodation premises). The level of assaults in this area has decreased, however the proportion of incidents tagged ‘domestic violence’ or ‘alcohol related’ has remained constant. There has been a significant upward trend in the recorded number of malicious damage incidents in this locality.
- Youth Crime. Recent statistics have not been provided on levels of youth crime. However in 2001 the Coffs Harbour Community Crime Prevention Plan identified youth crime as a significant priority crime issue. The Coffs Harbour LGA had 43% of recorded assaults listed as ‘domestic violence related’ in 2000.
- The Coffs Harbour Community Crime Prevention Plan 2001 has identified domestic violence as one of four priority crime issues in the Coffs Harbour LGA.
- Community attitudes have been identified locally which support the tolerance of domestic violence and contribute toward the hidden nature of domestic violence in the community.
- Domestic violence is more prevalent in low income families.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- Design public places in urban centres using design principles which assist crime prevention.
- Continue to forward development applications to the Police Crime Prevention Officer for consideration and advice in accordance with agreed protocol.
- Identify problem areas in existing developed locations and itemise individual methods to relieve this stress in specific detailed area plans.
- Design formal and informal public entertainment spaces as outlets for expression and to focus activity.
- Develop positive media strategies in order to provide recognition of the valuable and positive contributions of young people.
- Provide transport and recreational activities for young people within the Coffs Harbour LGA.
- Provide recreational / sporting facilities in new release areas.
- Develop media and education strategies in order to provide information on support services available in the community in relation to domestic violence.
- Incorporate measures to identify and eliminate stress factors for the community.
- Provide a mix of accommodation styles to provide for various income levels in each locality.
- Ensure sufficient levels of recreational and passive open space are retained.
- Continue to promote library policies to engage youth needs, as another mechanism for reducing youth crime.
## COMMUNITY RECREATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The provision of opportunities for people to participate in informal recreation and sporting activities is vital to the health and well-being of our communities.</td>
<td>There is a need to provide a diversity of accessible sporting and recreation facilities for the community at both the local and the regional level. Provision should consider population characteristics relating to age, ethnicity and residential density as well as recreation trends.</td>
<td>Develop benchmarks and targets for recreation facility provision, and ensure that planning for new communities incorporates these targets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whilst local government doesn’t always provide community, sporting and recreational facilities, planning strategies can assist in foreseeing the need for various facilities and, given good planning practices, alleviate some of the causes of demand for some facilities.</td>
<td>There is a general lack of knowledge about access to community facilities. This can be a barrier to their use.</td>
<td>Continue to identify gaps in the provision of existing facilities to meet various community needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of recreation and sporting facilities promotes an active healthy lifestyle and allows opportunities for socialising and developing social skills. Sport in particular encourages teamwork and cooperation, and is also a popular spectator activity. Fishing, surfing, cycling, walking, etc are also healthy pastimes which are highly popular in the Coffs Harbour LGA.</td>
<td>The Coffs Harbour LGA experiences a lack of specialist recreation facilities for target groups such as the youth and the elderly. Additionally, these groups often do not have ready accessibility and transport, even if the facilities exist.</td>
<td>Identify opportunities to redress the imbalance in provision at under-serviced locations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a regional centre, Coffs Harbour is supplying high quality regional level facilities that support sporting events across the region.</td>
<td>Northern villages and rural areas of the Coffs Harbour LGA are under serviced in terms of local level recreation opportunities, particularly for younger people.</td>
<td>Ensure planning addresses the needs of special target groups at both the local and regional level.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Council needs to provide quality recreation facilities for the wider community as well as visitors to the area. High visitation by tourists at popular locations at peak times of the year may reduce amenity for the local community.</td>
<td>Ensure planning provides for targeted robust tourist facilities at key destinations as well as a variety of facilities at alternate locations for the local community.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community surveys indicate a strong demand for additional recreational walkways and cycleways.</td>
<td>Provide and promote recreation facilities and activities in the rural sector for tourists as an alternative to beach related holiday activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community surveys indicate a strong demand for waterside recreation opportunities.</td>
<td>Continue the program for the provision of walkways and cycleways in consultation with community user groups.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Develop a neighbourhood local playground network, complemented by larger community playgrounds, and a regional, waterside multi-age play park.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Improve the range and quality of recreational opportunities in parklands and sponsor and promote/deliver targeted recreation programs within parks to increase visitation and usage.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Engage the community to provide for youth recreational facilities, particularly in the 10 years to mid-teen age bracket, linked with mechanisms for transport and access to and from these facilities.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## URBAN DESIGN

### BACKGROUND

Urban design is concerned with the quality of urban spaces. The form and nature of the City is a significant issue confronting Council and contemporary architecture.

Urban design is a key contributing factor – with health, education, employment and other social considerations – in assessing the “liveability” of urban areas.

Good urban design has the potential to foster a sense of shared ownership among residents, reduce crime and encourage socialising and community.

A healthy environment is also a key contributing factor in assessing the liveability of urban areas.

### ISSUES

- Coffs Harbour LGA has small pockets of good urban design. More frequently, ad hoc design has occurred.
- Council does not have blueprints for urban design in many areas. There is a need to better engage with landowners and design firms to implement improved urban design.
- Council is currently implementing a new code for water sensitive urban design. This will assist in improving design in subdivision and development layout.
- There is the need to provide community facilities and a “sense of place” in shopping centres.
- There is the need to provide for flexible planning controls to encourage positive impacts on communities and human relationships.
- In some suburban locations, large sized dwellings located on relatively small allotments create the appearance of eaves to eaves roofing with little separation between dwellings. It is important that urban design in Coffs Harbour does not encourage this phenomenon.

### STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- Use urban design principles that promote participation, social cohesion, sense of place and community well-being.
- Develop a “sense of place” within each neighbourhood.
- Create new spaces and landmarks which enhance built and cultural heritage and contribute to cultural identity.
- Provide a “town square / community centre / meeting place” in each neighbourhood, within walking distance of most development.
- Develop and apply performance criteria and standards for safety, surveillance, noise, amenity and privacy for subdivision and new developments with increased densities.
- Continue to provide comprehensive heritage provisions for our heritage areas.
- Undertake ongoing studies to revitalise shopping centres, create a sense of place and provide for community facilities.
- Design flexible planning controls to ensure urban design keeps pace with changes in best practice.
- Prepare masterplans for all business centres with the aim for flexibility over time.
- Provide a list of examples to provide positive guidance to the community relating to urban design.
- Investigate means of providing incentives to developers for consolidation of older areas to create better infill development.
- Ensure future density provisions in DCPs allow for adequate separation of dwellings.
### VISUAL ENVIRONMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sense of community has been found to be positively affected by urban planning that encourages visual coherence, diversity and attractiveness of houses and other buildings.</td>
<td>• It is important to retain key vistas – such as views of the coast and sea, forest and coastal range from all urban areas, as well as from the Pacific Highway and other main roads in the Coffs Harbour LGA.</td>
<td>• Maintain significant view corridors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One of the major attractions of the Coffs Harbour LGA is the contrast of rugged coastline and steep mountains, which creates a landscape of considerable beauty and interest.</td>
<td>• The Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) has announced its preferred route for the Pacific Highway. It will be necessary to protect views made available from the new route.</td>
<td>• Prepare a ridgeline protection and repair policy (for example, allowing clearing and development only on lower slopes) to protect ridgelines and foothills from development. This should be undertaken as a matter of high priority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preservation of wildlife corridors which cross the landscape and some ridgelines is important to preserve the visual environment.</td>
<td>• The green backdrop to the City has suffered from development pressures with the most recent property boom. Council does not currently have a ridgeline protection policy in place.</td>
<td>• Identify ways of improving urban amenity, eg street lighting, physical access, ease of walking, legibility of signs, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical and ad hoc development within the Coffs Harbour LGA has lead to a varied visual environment.</td>
<td>• Historical and ad hoc development within the Coffs Harbour LGA has lead to a varied visual environment.</td>
<td>• Adopt high design standards to create developments that add to the quality of the area and provide a high standard of amenity for all users.</td>
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<td>• Ensure all urban design allows for planting of large trees in our urban spaces. Revise Council’s small lot policies to ensure sufficient tree coverage is provided in these areas.</td>
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<td>• Revise Council’s current policies for road widths to ensure there is sufficient width to provide for treed streetscapes.</td>
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<td>• Adopt planting policies for streetscape which rely on density of foliage to conceal development.</td>
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<td>• Provide a list of examples to provide positive guidance to the community relating to street planting and visual environment.</td>
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<td>• Continually assess general town maintenance to ensure paintwork and finishes are kept in a state of good repair.</td>
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<td>• Complete a signage policy for the Coffs Harbour LGA.</td>
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# Open Space

## Background

Strategically planned open space networks link communities and create a sense of place, character and identity within settlements. The open space network also creates a sense of separation between settlements.

Surveys have shown that Coffs’ open space is highly valued by the community, providing opportunities for both informal recreation and sporting activities across a range of settings, as well as a location for socialising with family and friends.

The open space network also conserves and protects significant natural features and coastal ecosystems, providing valuable linkages for the movement of wildlife throughout the City.

As the population of the Coffs Harbour LGA increases and the trend towards smaller residential blocks and dwellings continues, there will be increased pressure placed on public open space.

The provision and promotion of a well-planned open space network that provides a diversity of recreation and sporting opportunities will improve the fitness, health and wellbeing of the community. This is critical as Australia is experiencing a health crisis due to physical inactivity.

The presence of “Green” Space within a community improves the liveability and overall health and wellbeing of that community.

## Issues

- There is unevenness in the spatial distribution of different types of open space across the City and its accessibility to members of the community.
- Recent community surveys have identified a strong demand for parkland linkages and more off-road walkways and cycleways.
- The need to acquire priority environmental areas has led to an undersupply of quality parkland suitable for recreation.
- Recent trends have been towards provision of poorer quality, constrained land for open space, presenting little or no opportunity for recreation by the community.
- Current parkland is generally underutilized due to issues with accessibility, perceived lack of safety, design and lack of facilities.
- Foreshore and waterside parks are the most preferred type of open space and the most enjoyed type of recreational experience for both the local community and visitors to the region, creating issues of overuse - particularly during tourist season.
- Natural areas are adversely affected by inappropriate adjoining developments, vandalism, weed infestation and encroachments by neighbours.
- Need to protect the values of natural areas whilst still providing for a level of community access and recreational opportunity.

## Strategic Actions

- Identify areas of undersupply of open space. Address these as opportunities arise through acquisition or dedication.
- Identify opportunities to achieve linkages of existing and future open space, either via the Council reserve network or by other land tenures.
- Develop networks of safe walkways and cycleways through parkland and natural areas to link residential areas to key destination points.
- Ensure planning for future subdivisions incorporates an adequate amount and variety of useable, interconnected open space that reflects current and future needs and maximizes sporting and recreational opportunities.
- Develop planning and design criteria for parkland acquisition to ensure the land is suitable for open space purposes.
- Undertake regular user surveys and be responsive to changing community trends in relation to the provision of open space to maximize community benefit.
- Continue programs of tree planting and landscaping to improve overall attractiveness of parklands.
- Ensure all future city centre redevelopment plans protect and enhance remaining civic open space.
- Continue the strategy of beach and foreshore improvements to increase amenities, maximise sustainable water based recreation opportunities and improve accessibility to the water.
- Ensure that all strategies for beach and foreshore improvements (to increase amenities and recreation opportunities) consider the environmental capacity for each area.
Coffs Harbour City Council has prepared its Population Profile 2004 to examine changes and trends in the local population over the last 10 years and to compare these with regional and Statewide trends. This Population Profile is available from Council.

During the 1970s and 1980s, Coffs Harbour’s population was expanding at a rate of over 4% per annum. This rate has slowed since 1996 to an average of 1.6% per annum.

Population projections released in 2004 by the DoP estimate that if this rate continues, the population will reach 91,800 persons by 2031. Council has lobbied with DoP over this projection, arguing that recent moratoriums on development because of services in the Northern Beaches area have kept the growth rate artificially low.

Discussions with DoP over the term of the preparation of this Strategy have resulted in Council adopting higher projections of 99,000 by 2031 for the Coffs Harbour LGA.

The impact of population growth varies over time. Council’s policies and services need to be flexible enough to deal with changes in population.

The ageing of our population creates a dilemma for our labour force and implications for provision of health and community services. A balanced population growing across all age brackets is more satisfactory to the long-term growth of the Coffs Harbour LGA than growth that is skewed to age brackets over 40 (ageing populations).

The number of people aged between 25 and 34 years in Coffs Harbour decreased between 1991 and 2001 (-9%), largely due to people moving to metropolitan areas for job opportunities.

As our population increases, there will be continuing issues of development pressures, competing land use pressures and land use conflicts.

As a regional hub, Coffs provides social services to people outside of the Coffs Harbour LGA. There needs to be a coordinated approach to the provision of such services.

One of the downsides of population growth is the perceived loss of personal space – the risk of feeling crowded at, say, our beaches.

The community needs to be provided with a range of living options (for example, urban, suburban, village, rural residential and rural) to cater to their individual needs for living space.

We need to ensure appropriate decision-making considers issues relating to the younger generation.

People don’t always understand the full implications of population growth, and how it can impact the Coffs Harbour LGA over time.

- Provide a land release program aligned to population thresholds.
- Put into place a support system for our ageing population, including health services, housing and transport.
- Examine mechanisms to address the long-term provision of employment and business opportunities in the Coffs Harbour LGA, particularly to attract and retain people in the 18-35 age brackets.
- Provide clearer planning documents so the public can easily understand anticipated land uses in any given area.
- Engage with partners in the region for the provision of recreational / cultural services.
- Engage the community in determining the social capacity of the Coffs Harbour LGA (for example, the provision of appropriate open space).
- Encourage a range of living places with different character.
- Ensure all generations are represented in decision making (eg. establish a youth committee).
- Conduct education campaigns to identify the implications of population growth.
CREATING COMMUNITIES

**BACKGROUND**

Australian suburbs - once village communities - have experienced enormous changes in the past three decades.

The pressures of modern living and vast changes in society’s values and family relationships have created a situation where families seal themselves off from the rest of the world. Much of their everyday living and entertainment is now created within the home. This can create a cycle of isolation.

Coffs Harbour LGA has a series of settlements in the form of beachside villages and local towns, as well as the three key settlements of Coffs Harbour, Sawtell/Toormina/Boambee East, and Woolgoolga. In any future growth of the Coffs Harbour LGA, it is important to preserve these village and town communities, rather than see a sprawl of development along the entire eastern side of the Coffs Harbour LGA.

The Strategy has classified urban areas as Coastal City, Coastal Town, Coastal Village, Hinterland Village or Coastal Hamlet.

Strategic actions need to be designed specifically for the classification of each area.

**ISSUES**

- Council needs to investigate ways of creating ‘living’ suburbs and seeking to return to village-style communities.
- Neighbourhood communities can be designed to ensure the activities that we do most often, the products that we need most often, and the production processes that are the simplest are close to us.
- There is a need to understand our daytime populations – target groups in daytime urban environments are predominantly young families and the elderly – and plan facilities in these areas to meet these needs.
- Coffs Harbour LGA has a skewed population of older residents. This creates potential long-term difficulties in the provision of facilities and services. A cross section of jobs, incomes and social types makes for more healthy communities.
- Libraries are a public space which can be visited year round in any weather. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) statistics show that Australian public libraries are the most visited community recreation facilities in the country. As such, well located libraries with up-to-date resources and facilities can play a key role in creating and strengthening communities.

**STRATEGIC ACTIONS**

- Prepare desired character statements for each locality in future Place Management Plans.
- Build up suburban activity centres at key locations offering a range of services which contribute to a sense of place.
- Allow for provision of services and facilities in residential areas to encourage exercise and neighbourly activity (for example, parklands and play equipment, footpaths, post boxes and public phones).
- Define boundaries to neighbourhood areas and undertake measures over time to build neighbourhood identity.
- Set dwelling mix targets for new release areas.
- Investigate mechanisms to harness youth interests into industry/business within the Coffs Harbour LGA.
- Set up suburban activity centres at key locations offering a range of services which contribute to a sense of place.
- Prepare an inventory of needs of the different community populations and begin to implement items listed in the inventory in neighbourhood areas.
- Convene a forum to devise means to resolve youth unemployment.
# HOUSING

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<tr>
<th>BACKGROUND</th>
<th>ISSUES</th>
<th>STRATEGIC ACTIONS</th>
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As the demographic make-up of our population changes, we need to look at a variety of housing types to meet a variety of needs. Since the 1950s the average house size has doubled while the number of people per household has decreased.

The emphasis on low-density suburban development has priced many young people out of the housing market. The construction of affordable housing will be one of our biggest challenges in the coming decades.

The market will need to consider more resource-efficient compact housing within the Coffs Harbour LGA. Aside from being less expensive, compact residential development benefits communities by reducing vehicle trips, encouraging cycling and walking, and supporting public transport. When people live at higher densities, they are more likely to walk, shop locally, and get to know their neighbours, fostering a sense of community and creating safer neighbourhoods.

- The ABS has estimated that the mean occupancy rate for dwellings will drop from 2.6 to 2.2 persons by 2021. This means the market for housing will continue to change significantly in coming years, and has implications for the provision of housing stock.
- Compact development cannot be addressed without simultaneously looking at the quality of design. High-quality design provides urban amenities, affordable housing and ready access to destinations. It involves trading in the suburban lifestyle for the benefits of affordable housing, compact urban development and a lively urban experience.
- The lack of crisis accommodation and medium term housing is a significant issue for the community.
- There is still a shortage of aged care accommodation within the Coffs Harbour LGA.
- Urban infilling in areas such as the Jetty can result in parking and traffic issues for local long-term residents.
- Encourage a mix of housing types.
- Amend density provisions in inner City areas (such as Coffs City CBD, Sawtell, Woolgoolga and Inner West Coffs) to allow for the development of additional affordable and aged housing.
- Revise densities in existing residential zones to require new development to meet minimum density guidelines.
- Engage with multi-unit developers to discuss the potential for development within the Coffs Harbour LGA.
- Investigate potential locations for the creation of relocatable home parks for permanent residents and prepare appropriate design guidelines for these.
- Actively pursue State and Federal government agencies to investigate options for the provision of additional support accommodation.
- Plan for additional aged care facilities within key centres of the Coffs Harbour LGA.
- Implement recommendations of Coffs Harbour’s Social Plan relating to housing affordability.
- Prepare a parking study to determine whether Council’s Parking Code requires amendment in infill areas.
PUBLIC AND PRIVATE TRANSPORT

**BACKGROUND**

Coffs is a car-dominated community, with car-oriented development. This necessitates the use of the Pacific Highway to provide a number of daily north/south trips to service local needs. Our transport system will be improved by implementing policies to reduce reliance on private vehicles for local trips.

The Pacific Highway cuts through many of our urban areas. There is the need to develop an improved transport system to separate local and through traffic. Additionally, the highway creates a barrier to movement. It effectively severs the community in many of our urban areas, and hinders movement of east-west local traffic.

Coffs Harbour has a public bus service which provides for limited travel around our urban areas. A multi-faceted approach to public transport is required, taking into account local land use planning and infrastructure constraints.

A lack of an extensive public transport system leads to car-dependent travel patterns now and for future generations. This significantly disadvantages teenagers, younger adults and the elderly who are the primary users of public transport for access to work, shopping, recreation opportunities and other community facilities and services. (It must be acknowledged however that without a large population base it is not always economic to provide a quality public transport system.)

**ISSUES**

- Resolution of regional and local road networks is required.
- Settlement patterns dictate transport needs. The current settlement pattern has led to a high use of the private car, and less use of bicycles and public transport.
- The lineal growth and dispersed settlement pattern of the City has resulted in difficulties with the provision of public transport. The more compact an urban area (that is, the higher the density of people in a location) the easier it is to provide public transport.
- Creation of communities is a key means to reduce the need to travel along the Pacific Highway daily. This allows for increasing use of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- Community education is necessary to inform the public of the significant impact their reliance on the motor vehicle has on our environment and society.
- There is a reluctance of residents to use existing public transport.
- The RTA has advised its preferred Pacific Highway location. Any future development for urban purposes should be kept to one side of the final alignment to ensure that community severance is minimised.
- Students within 1.6km of a Primary School and 2.3km of a High School are not eligible for a bus pass (with the exception of children in grades K-2). Safe pedestrian and cycle access to those schools is a priority.

**STRATEGIC ACTIONS**

- Complete the Coffs Harbour LGA Transport Strategy and implement findings and recommendations over time.
- Provide services and facilities in residential localities to create self-reliant/self-sufficient communities, with a reduced need for local car trips.
- Restrict residential development to one side of the RTA’s preferred Pacific Highway bypass route, wherever possible.
- Direct public transport, cycling and walking into the heart of each residential area and as close as possible to meeting areas and public spaces.
- Include policy provisions that allow for work from home opportunities.
- Provide for compulsory mixed-use zones to allow for a combination of business and commercial components.
- Offer incentives to developers to provide housing in business zones.
- Undertake education and promotion initiatives to promote car-pooling, use of footpaths and cycleways, and a reduction in unnecessary car use.
- Do not allow for rezoning of lands for urban purposes unless it is known that safe and efficient access can ultimately be gained.
- At the Development Control Plan (DCP) and Development Application (DA) stage, consult with bus companies on standard of roads, turning areas, provision of loop roads (where practical) and location of bus stops to ensure improved access.
- Ensure DCPs are written with the requirement that residences should (where practical and reasonable) have access to a collector road bus stop every 400 metres.
best provide for people to move around our City?

**PATH AND CYCLEWAY NETWORKS**

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<th>BACKGROUND</th>
<th>ISSUES</th>
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In Coffs Harbour LGA, path and cycleway facilities are provided at two levels. Local streets are used for walking and cycling and footpaths and cycleways are provided along collector and distributor roads.

Pedestrian and bicycle friendly streets are vital public amenities, contributing to community sustainability. Children playing outside, neighbours socialising and people walking can be limited by the constant presence of moving cars. Car dominance erodes the independent mobility of children.

Streets that are pedestrian and bicycle-friendly promote social interaction, enable people to engage in physical exercise (which enhances personal well-being) and discourage car usage and its associated effects.

Footpaths are used by a variety of people following an equally wide range of pursuits. There is a generally accepted view by the community and road safety authorities that cycling on footpaths provides major benefits to the community, particularly primary school aged children.

The availability of an extensive network will encourage walking and cycling by the community.

- There are not enough footpaths provided in the Coffs Harbour LGA. Funding has not been available to provide these facilities.
- Council is under continued pressure to provide footpath and cycleway facilities throughout the Coffs Harbour LGA.
- The development of facilities for walking and cycling provides a larger part of the population with equality of opportunity for access to social, material and cultural services.
- There has been poor integration between Council documents in the past, meaning that some items recommended in one document are not carried through in another.
- Students within 1.6km of a Primary School and 2.3km of a High School are not eligible for a bus pass. Safe pedestrian and cycle access to those schools is a priority.
- Implement recommendations of the Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan (PAMP) and Bike Plan.
- Develop innovative transport planning that increases cycling and walking opportunities, especially for short trips.
- Prepare DCPs that link to the PAMP and require provision of pathways and cycleways at the development stage.
- Develop a Section 94 Contributions Plan for the provision of path and cycleway networks throughout the City.
- Establish a high quality pedestrian-oriented street environment that is visually interesting and well connected.
- Incorporate features such as shade, seating, landscaping, drinking bubblers, historical plaques and artworks in accordance with the PAMP to make walking and cycling more pleasant.
- Ensure DCPs provide shared path connections to schools, shops and other trip generators from residential areas.
## TRANSPORT NOISE

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<tr>
<td>Aircraft noise has an impact on the surrounding urban area. Australian standards regulate acceptable aircraft noise in residential areas.</td>
<td>Aircraft noise has the greatest impact on the surrounding urban areas of Toormina and Coffs Jetty.</td>
<td>Continue to implement control on development in flight path areas to reduce social impacts to residents associated with aircraft noise.</td>
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<td>Traffic noise is affected by many factors including the road surface, speed of the vehicle, type of vehicle and the volume of traffic. Major arterial roads that pass through residential areas create noise problems for immediate neighbours.</td>
<td>Coffs Harbour Airport is a significant regional facility which is likely to grow in importance over future years. It is located centrally and appropriately for the nature of development in the area.</td>
<td>Implement controls in Council’s Transport Strategy to address the issue of traffic noise on nearby residential development.</td>
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<td>The RTA has now announced its preferred route in proximity to the Coffs Harbour urban area. This has implications for planning for future noise impacts.</td>
<td>An increase in airport traffic may have an impact on noise levels in nearby residential areas.</td>
<td>Regulate development near to the rail corridor to ensure it complies with rail noise and vibration attenuation standards.</td>
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<td>The North Coast Railway line is to be upgraded within five years to allow for movement of freight via rail. This has implications in terms of noise and vibration.</td>
<td>The Pacific Highway runs through many residential areas of the Coffs Harbour LGA.</td>
<td>Restrict and/or prohibit noise-sensitive developments where rail noise and vibration cannot be mitigated.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The North Coast Railway line also adjoins a number of residential precincts. This has implications in terms of noise and vibration particularly as there will be an increase in the frequency and length of trains (goods/freight trains up to 1.5km long).</td>
<td>Provide sufficient buffers at the Local Environmental Study (LES)/LEP stage in all urban investigation areas to reduce impacts of noise and vibration.</td>
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<td>The considerable number of B-double trucks which pass through Coffs Harbour LGA - particularly at night - already has an impact on some residential areas.</td>
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## ARTS AND CULTURE

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<th>STRATEGIC ACTIONS</th>
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<tr>
<td>For the purposes of this document culture is defined as being &quot;the way in which people give meaning and expression to their lives&quot;.</td>
<td>There is a need to develop a vibrant and thriving cultural identity which is creative, informed, skilled and productive. This identity needs to ensure that equality, access, individual creativity, self expression and cultural diversity flourish.</td>
<td>Develop and implement a Strategic Cultural Plan for the City. This Plan needs to include the whole community and embrace the human, built and natural diversity of the area.</td>
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<td>This includes a range of key areas including facility planning, economic and skills development, embracing diversity and difference as well as building relationships and integration.</td>
<td>Public art is a means of enhancing the natural and built environment. Works can be temporary and/or permanent in a variety of settings to reflect a multiplicity of interests and differences in people. This is a necessary element in the creation of a sense of place. Successful public art and design programs are underpinned by creativity, innovation and community participation.</td>
<td>Give a strong focus to the strategic development of creative industries within the Coffs Harbour LGA to ensure the greatest economic benefit to the City.</td>
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<td>State and local government have participated in the provision of facilities and support for cultural planning and development within the Coffs Harbour LGA.</td>
<td>The community must make a commitment to ensure the heritage and traditions of the local Aboriginal people of the region require a commitment to ensure they are identified, conserved, managed and appropriately interpreted.</td>
<td>Within the Strategic Cultural Plan, identify the future plans for public art, event development and facility requirements.</td>
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<td>A commitment is required to improve the quality of life of the community by stimulating the development and promotion of creative cultural events, festivals, celebrations and street performances.</td>
<td>Provide for the development of regional facilities and services in the City.</td>
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<td>Develop a Strategic Plan for Council’s public library service.</td>
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<td>Provide opportunities for the cultural development, events development and facility requirements of local Aboriginal people.</td>
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<td>Provide opportunities for the cultural development of the local Punjabi Sikh community and other sections of Coffs Harbour’s multicultural community.</td>
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Coffs Harbour has seen the development of the regional Health Campus in recent years. It has on-site specialists in most disciplines with visiting specialists in other areas.

Nursing training - now being offered at nearby Southern Cross University - will assist with the provision of staff to meet some of the local need.

However, a number of local health and community support services have not kept pace with population growth. With our ageing population, the need for the provision of these services is likely to increase even further.

- In many cases, demand exceeds supply. This means that many people in the community have difficulty accessing the services or facilities they need.
- Further expansion of urban areas risks increasing these problems.
- The elderly and Indigenous populations have been identified as the most disadvantaged groups seeking care.
- Parking at the Coffs Harbour Health Campus is an issue at certain times of the day.
- There will be difficulties experienced by Council and relevant agencies over time in servicing our ageing community.
- Adopt standards for health services and facilities provision.
- Provide for future regional needs associated with the Coffs Harbour Health Campus.
- Undertake an education strategy for the promotion of healthy lifestyles.
- Provide for a diversity of health services in appropriate locations.
- Identify suitable areas for the provision of seniors living facilities, and develop these into a strategic plan.
- Investigate the need for improved health services in the northern sector of the Coffs Harbour LGA.
**EQUITY OF ACCESS**

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<tr>
<td>All members of the community should enjoy the same level of access to goods, services and facilities.</td>
<td>There is an increased likelihood that people with disabilities will struggle to:</td>
<td>Implement recommendations of the Disability Action Plan.</td>
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<td>Disability and its impact on access can take many forms. These include:</td>
<td>- find and keep open employment,</td>
<td>Implement recommendations of the PAMP.</td>
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<td>- physical,</td>
<td>- have transport and mobility options,</td>
<td>Prepare DCPs which link to the PAMP and which require provision of adequate access in all areas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- intellectual,</td>
<td>- live in appropriate, affordable housing, and</td>
<td>Revised mobility maps to provide up to date information on access around our urban areas.</td>
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<td>- visual,</td>
<td>- access recreational and leisure activities.</td>
<td>Prepare information on the provision of adaptable housing, to promote ageing in place.</td>
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<td>- other sensory, and</td>
<td>Access to appropriate support services (including person care, respite care and transport) are fundamental for many in the community.</td>
<td>Explore incentives for provision of adaptable housing.</td>
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<td>- age related.</td>
<td>A series of mobility maps for the area has been developed utilising the skills and experience of community members with disabilities.</td>
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<td>In 1992 the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act was introduced. Under the Act it is unlawful to discriminate against people with disabilities in almost every aspect of daily life.</td>
<td>Council has a Disability Action Plan already in place. However it needs to be fully implemented.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Building Code of Australia also sets out a range of requirements to ensure equal access for all.</td>
<td>There needs to be greater provision of adaptable housing, that is with facilities which can be adapted to assist with mobility as people age.</td>
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