

## **5.6 PROPOSED FRAMEWORK FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMMUNITY PLAN**

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**DEPARTMENT:** CEO Unit

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**That Council:**

- 1. Note the Community Plan Framework Proposal;**
- 2. Consider a staged development of a Community Plan:**
  - a. 2016 – 2017 Operational Plan - Development of a consultancy brief with substantial input from Councillors and engagement of a consultant; and**
  - b. 2017- 2018 Operational Plan – Development of a Community Plan**

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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

As part of the 2015/16 Operational Plan the CEO Unit was to investigate strategic planning frameworks developed by other Local Governments to gain a greater understanding of some of the best practice models that may be applicable or suited to the Douglas region.

In order to identify the model or framework that best suits the Douglas Shire officers have undertaken extensive research of a number of models used throughout Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

The attached Community Plan Framework Proposal provides Council with an understanding of various 'community planning' models and the options available to best meet the needs of the Douglas communities.

### **BACKGROUND**

As a newly formed Council, extensive community engagement has been implemented since 2014 to gain a clear understanding of the aspirations of the elected representatives and the diverse communities that form Douglas.

The information acquired to date has informed the development of Operational and Capital Plans and Budgets over the short term, along with the Long Term Financial Forecast.

The purpose of a Community Plan is to establish and set out the long term vision, aspirations and priorities of the community. It is the community's voice, identifying the key themes, challenges and what is important to them and for their future.

### **COMMENT**

Council has not yet developed a formal position in relation to including the development of a Community Plan in future Operational Planning and Budget allocations.

Investigating the various models or approaches that are commonly applied throughout Australia and various countries will allow Council to make a decision based upon best practice. There is also the opportunity to ensure the models or combination of models best suited to Douglas' diverse communities are utilised.

The models investigated provided insight to both whole of community planning and to developing individual plans to meet the challenges and priorities of Douglas communities. Bringing the individual plans into one overarching document where identified Council actions are then implemented through Corporate, Operational and Capital Plans appears to be a successful approach.

The Township/Neighbourhood approach has significant community ownership not only in the development of the Plans, but in implementing the actions. Many Community Plans contain priorities and solutions that are not a Council responsibility such as health or transport services. It is understood that Council does have a role in these areas, however the primary responsibility would be that of the State or Federal Government. The model identified encourages and supports communities to band together to address priorities that are not Council core business.

Should Council choose to implement the identified framework, Township/Neighbourhood Planning, it would be anticipated the project would take approximately twelve months. The challenges of distance and gaining community ownership of the project may impact upon meeting that timeframe.

Should Council make the decision to include a staged development of a Community Plan in future Operational Plans it is important to understand why the process was initiated and what the desired outcomes are.

## **PROPOSAL**

That Council note the Community Plan Framework Proposal and give consideration to implementing a staged approach to the development of a Community Plan:

- 2016 – 2017 Operational Plan - Development of a consultancy brief with substantial input from Councillors and engagement of consultant
- 2017- 2018 Operational Plan – Development of a Community Plan

## **FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

Based upon preliminary investigation the financial implications of developing a Community Plan would be approximately \$150,000.

This figure includes, but is not limited to items such as:

- Workshops with Councillors to develop an appropriate consultancy brief
- Consultancy fees
- Advertising
- Graphic Design
- Catering
- Fees
- Additional facilitators
- Other Councillor workshops
- Report writing (including implementation plan)

## RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

No risk management implications.

## SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

**Economic:** The development of a Plan could provide a positive impact upon the local economy.

**Environmental:** The development of a Plan would include opportunities to maintain or improve the natural environment.

**Social:** The development of a Community Plan needs to have clearly identified actions and outcomes. The proposed model has high community involvement not only in identifying the challenges and opportunities, but in implementing them.

## CORPORATE/OPERATIONAL PLAN, POLICY REFERENCE

This report has been prepared in accordance with the following:

### Operational Plan 2015-2016 Actions:

*CEO4 - Investigate the strategic planning framework for the development of a Douglas Community Plan.*

## COUNCIL'S ROLE

Council can play a number of different roles in certain circumstances and it is important to be clear about which role is appropriate for a specific purpose or circumstance. The implementation of actions will be a collective effort and Council's involvement will vary from information only through to full responsibility for delivery.

The following areas outline where Council has a clear responsibility to act:

**Advocate** Supporting communities and groups by advocating for certain actions from other organisations (usually other levels of government).

## CONSULTATION

**Internal:** In preparing this proposal consultation has taken place with

- The Chief Executive Officer
- The General Manager Corporate Services
- Former Acting Manager Governance

**External:**

- Possible People
- Tablelands Regional Council
- Cook Shire Council

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Significant levels of community engagement will be required to develop a Community Plan. A comprehensive engagement plan would be developed by the consultant engaged to develop the Community Plan.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 - Draft Community Plan Framework

2016

# Community Plan Project Proposal



Kerrie Hawkes , Executive Officer



October 2016

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# Community Plan Proposal

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October 2016

## Part 1

### Purpose

To provide a proposed project framework for the development of the Douglas Shire Council Community Plan (the Plan).

A community plan is a document that sets out the aspirations and priorities of the community. It is the community's voice, identifying the vision, key themes, challenges and what is important to them and for their future.

### Introduction

#### Background

The previous Douglas Shire Council developed the 2007 Community Engagement Outcomes 'Your Shire, Your Say' strategic document. The purpose of the document was to *"assist in providing direction to the Council in its future Corporate Planning, long term Operational Plans and Budgets"*. Many of the actions identified in the document have been implemented, are ongoing or priorities have changed.

In 2008, Douglas Shire Council and Cairns City Council amalgamated to form Cairns Regional Council.

As a newly amalgamated Council, the *'Imagine Tomorrow'* Community Plan was developed to create a document that provided a framework for future development and growth; gain a clear understanding of the needs and priorities of its residents; and comply with its statutory obligations.

During this period it was a requirement under the *Local Government Act 2009* to develop a Community Plan.

Following the 2012 state elections, the new Government amended the *Local Government Act 2009* by removing the requirement for Local Governments to create a Community Plan.

On 1 January 2014, Douglas Shire Council commenced operation as a newly de-amalgamated Council.

As a newly formed Council, extensive community engagement was carried out to gain a clear understanding of the aspirations of the recently elected representatives and the diverse communities that form Douglas. The information gathered during this engagement process compiled the 2014-2016 Corporate Plan. The Corporate Plan informs the annual Operational Plan initiatives and Annual Budget.

## Community Engagement at Douglas

Since de-amalgamation, Council has implemented a substantial number of community engagement opportunities to identify the needs of our communities. There have been over thirty instances including, community meetings, workshops, surveys, forums and deputations to Councillors.

This has included the Corporate Plan which provided an extensive range of community engagement opportunities (community meetings, roaming community surveys, and electronic submissions) to assist Council with identifying the strategic direction and priorities over a five year period.

Officers have also recently completed engagement on the Planning Scheme, the Economic Development Strategy, the Art Strategy, the initial phase of the Local Law Review and will also begin engagement for the Sustainability Strategy in the coming months.

Examples of engagement involve community meetings and workshops, surveys and a variety of ways to provide more formal input. Council also frequently asks our communities' opinions in other informal ways such as through our Facebook and web pages, attendance at organisation and service provider meetings.

Council has facilitated community forums north of the Daintree River, initiated workshops and meetings throughout the Shire to identify and discuss challenges and solutions and has implemented those into council's Corporate Plan, Operational Plans and Capital Works Plans.

## Community Planning

A Community Plan is designed to provide guidance to Councillors, staff, communities, State and Federal Governments and local service providers on how Council will respond to the opportunities and challenges the Shire faces over the long term.

Although not a legislative requirement in Queensland, long term community planning can be beneficial and is described as principles, processes and products that:

- can produce a long term vision;
- establish key priorities and actions with a shared implementation approach;
- have a holistic focus on the social, economic, environment and cultural wellbeing of the community;
- are facilitated but not owned by Council;
- are across the Shire, but incorporate local priorities and plans; and
- has community strengthening as a goal and community participation as a central feature.

### Community Planning Models

There are many varied models of community planning. Community plans can range from visionary documents to detailed action plans, from highly developed engagement opportunities, to the most basic of consultation processes, and from a Council managed document to one implemented by local steering or advisory committees.

In order to identify the model or framework that best suits the Douglas Shire, officers have undertaken extensive research into a number of models used throughout Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

Approaches are determined by many elements, including the available resources and the level or history of engagement previously undertaken within the Shire.

It is also important to have a clear answer to the following before progressing with a Community Plan framework.

1. Who initiated the process?
2. Who will own the process?
3. Why was the process initiated?
4. What is the desired outcome?

It is vital to make the decision regarding who will be responsible for developing the Plan. Will it be developed in-house or by a consultant? Irrespective of who is developing the Plan, it will be a corporate responsibility to ensure the Plan is implemented and completed. It is important to identify the resources required, the time frame and commitment of Council (financially) to implement the Plan once developed and to manage and meet community expectations.

#### Why have the following models been chosen?

The models below or approaches to community planning have taken into account the diverse needs of the communities and the increased desire by residents and rate payers to have greater influence over the decisions Council makes regarding their future.

Models	Details
<b>Community Empowerment (Traditionally used in Indigenous Communities to ensure influence and control over decisions that impact on their lives.)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focuses on delivering tangible positive community outcomes</li> <li>• Is initiated by Government but led by a steering/advisory group comprised of community members</li> <li>• Intensive and consistent community engagement</li> <li>• Progress of the Plan is monitored and reviewed by the steering/advisory group</li> </ul>
<b>Neighbourhood Planning (Brisbane City Council – “Shaping Brisbane 2016”)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location based meetings and forums focused on local issues</li> <li>• Implementation of actions by local committees</li> <li>• Relies on a high level of community engagement</li> </ul>
<b>Integrated Council and Community Planning (Port Phillip City Council – “Community Plan 2007-2017”)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Led by Council in partnership with key stakeholders with shared responsibility for outcome</li> <li>• Commitment of Council to deliver on priorities and allocate appropriate resources</li> <li>• Integration of identified priorities through range of strategic documents</li> <li>• Integration of community priorities</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion of long term vision - as “Where do you see the Shire in 2030...”</li> <li>• Encourages proactive, independent community actions that strive to achieve the identified priority outcomes</li> </ul>
<b>Long Term Vision Planning (Yarra Ranges Shire – “Vision 2020”)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council led</li> <li>• Identifies and prioritises key challenges over a long timeframe, 20+ years</li> <li>• Asks questions such as “Where do you see the Shire in 2037...”</li> <li>• Inter linked with Long Term Financial Planning</li> </ul>
<b>Township Based Community Planning (Hepburn Shire – “Community Action Plans”)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan is based on town or communities needs – local issues that are relevant to that particular area</li> <li>• Shorter timeframes for priorities to be actioned</li> <li>• Facilitated by Council with strong resident leadership and ownership of plans and their implementation</li> <li>• Strong community engagement and limited Council, agency involvement</li> </ul>

Through this background research it is clear that community planning is not a ‘one size fits all’ and there is not one model that is commonly used. In the instance of Douglas it may be beneficial to consider using a combination of models.

The Township Community Plan approach provides opportunity for the local residents to own the Plan pertaining to their immediate area. It allows the local communities to work towards promoting their priorities for the agenda of key stakeholders, where the priority is not Council business. The key point to this approach is that the local community has ownership of the actions and Council plays a key role in facilitating the process.

The Long Term Vision Planning means committing resources to a long term process and seeing actions take place in the immediate, middle and long term.

When choosing a model it is imperative to ensure the purpose of the Plan is clear and what the benefits of having a Plan are.

## Part 2

### A Douglas Shire Community Plan Model

When developed, the Plan needs to be responsive and relevant to the issues and concerns of the local areas. It must aim to address community priorities and opportunities.

When exploring the many different models of community engagement available, officers considered that the Township or Neighbourhood Based Community Planning model would best achieve the needs of our communities and Council.

Douglas has a large number of small, diverse communities that all have very unique needs, challenges and opportunities.

For example, Port Douglas is promoted as one of the premium tourist destinations of the north. There is an expectation that the town will retain the laid back village atmosphere with all the services and infrastructure of a major town.

Mossman is the primary location of agriculture and government services. The communities to the north of the Shire have challenges with transport, communication and in some instances lack of essential services.

A challenge for Douglas is addressing the differing views, wants and needs in the communities, with these differences likely to increase as Douglas' population changes.

Through the development of the Plan, Council should aim to obtain quality outcomes from community input to influence and inform decision making. Community input must be provided or gathered in a transparent, deliberative manner which can be integrated into decision making processes.

#### Township or Neighbourhood Planning

As our diverse communities have become more established and their awareness of the challenges and needs increase, there is greater determination from individuals and groups to ensure that policies and projects meet the local needs.

Improved communications via the web and social media has influenced people to become more informed and exercise a certain influence over their environment.

Participation in political and public issues has increased and the exchange of ideas and priorities has enabled community participation in planning of projects and proposals.

Township or Neighbourhood Based Community Planning is based upon individual towns or communities' needs. Often the implementation of actions is shared or taken up by the communities who have the role of leadership and ownership of the Plan. This model is facilitated by Council with strong community engagement.

This approach has the potential to be a successful process as the participants are engaged and invested in the development and implementation of the Plan.

## Resources

The Planning process will require significant internal resources through Councillor, Senior Management and officer contributions in addition to Council facilities and customer service centres, irrespective of this process being conducted by Officers or an external consultant.

It must also accommodate the other strategic plans that have been developed or under development by Council presently.

These include:

- The Town Planning Scheme
- The Economic Development Strategy
- The Art Strategy
- The Local Law Review
- The Recreational Vehicle Strategy
- The Sustainability Strategy

It is anticipated communities from Wangetti on the southern boundary through to Port Douglas, Mossman, Wonga, Daintree Village, and north of the Daintree River through to Buru at the northern most point of the Shire will be included as individual communities.

The suggested framework is estimated to take approximately twelve months with phases identified. However, as the communities of the Shire are spread over a vast area, it is recommended that some flexibility in the delivery timeframe for the final document be allowed. Two years is suggested.

To ensure a participatory and consultative approach to this project, preliminary investigations into project costs with two separate consultants has indicated a financial commitment of approximately \$150,000 would be required.

This figure includes, but is not limited to items such as:

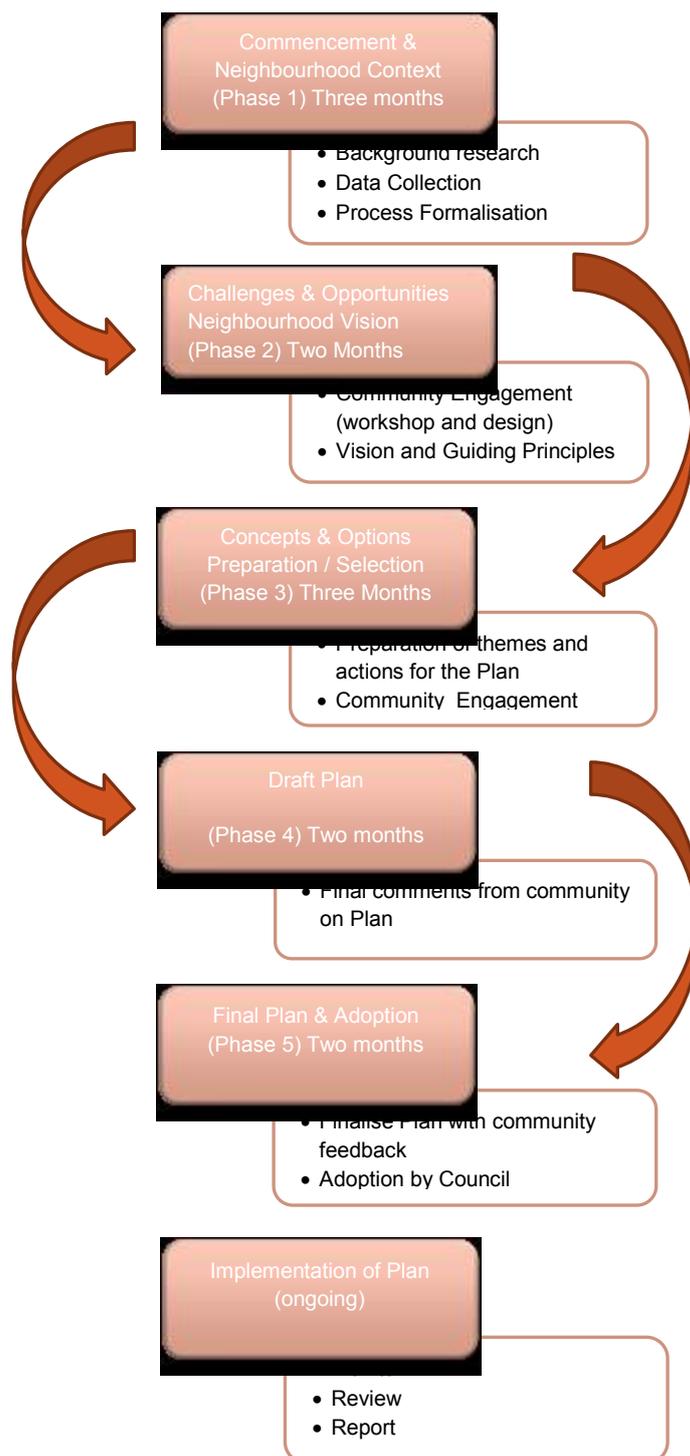
- Workshops with Councillors to develop an appropriate consultancy brief
- Consultancy fees
- Advertising
- Graphic design
- Catering
- Fees
- Additional facilitators
- Other Councillor workshops
- Report writing (including implementation plan)

## Township/Neighbourhood Planning Framework

The challenge of distance and the diverse needs of the various communities that form Douglas require a comprehensive desktop review, followed by community engagement.

There will be the opportunity for extensive use of digital engagement. However, the very nature of the proposed framework requires community participation and ownership to ensure the implementation and success of the Community Plan.

Understanding Council’s direction and purpose of the Plan and what Council want to achieve is crucial to the success of developing the consultancy brief and the structure of the Plan.



## Part 3

### Conclusion

Council is continually engaging with the diverse communities of Douglas through workshops, forums, informal meetings, surveys and a strong online presence. The knowledge already acquired by Council through the large number of engagement opportunities implemented since 2014 is extensive.

However, the challenges of distance and often communication have made it difficult for smaller communities to be heard.

The development of smaller plans that address the needs of individual communities and are integrated into all areas of Council planning will better inform decisions and ensure Council is fully equipped to respond to the needs of the communities.

In order for the Township or Neighbourhood Based Community Planning model to be successful, a strong commitment from the community is required. There is also the requirement to ensure adequate resources are dedicated to facilitate the final Plan being embedded into corporate strategies and processes.

This will secure the commitment of both the communities and Council to the successful implementation of actions identified in the Plan.

## References

Redlands City Community Plan

Strengthening Communities, Enhancing Cooperative Extension's Role National Community Resources and Economic Development Conference 2002, *Models of community Planning*, Donald P. Lacy, Michael John Dougherty, Pamela D. Gibson

City of Yarra, *Yarra Community Plan Background Paper*

City of Sydney, *Sustainable Sydney 2030*, Community Strategic Plan (2014)

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