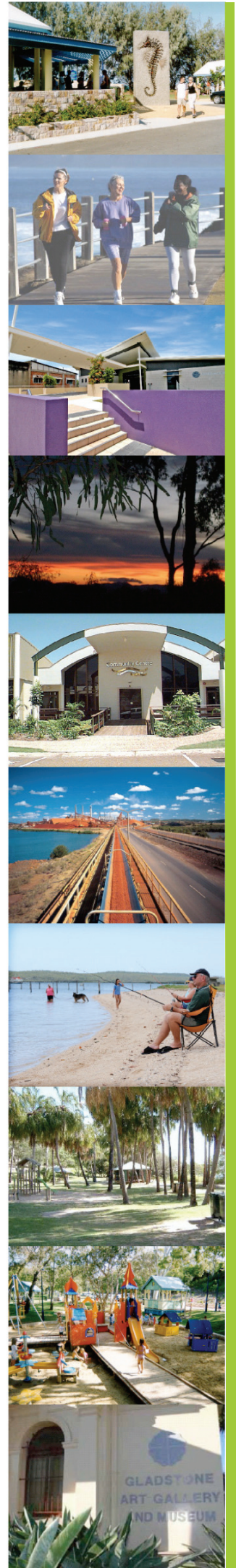




SUMMARY REPORT

Social Infrastructure Strategic Plan for the Gladstone Region

JUNE 2010



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Buckley Vann Town Planning Consultants, Briggs & Mortar Pty Ltd and Andrea Young Planning Consultants were commissioned by the Department of Infrastructure and Planning (DIP), Gladstone Regional Council (GRC) and the Gladstone Economic and Industry Development Board (GEIDB) to prepare a Social Infrastructure Strategic Plan (SIS Plan) for the Gladstone region. This region has been defined as the Gladstone Regional Council Area, which includes the former Gladstone City and Miriam Vale and Calliope Shires.

This report summarises all previous stages of the SIS Plan, and provides a summary of the findings of the Plan.

1.1 Project Overview

DIP issued a brief on 29 October 2008 for the preparation of a SIS Plan for the Gladstone Regional Council area.

The brief identifies the objective of the SIS Plan as to *'inform and guide future planning activities and investment decisions for strategic social infrastructure in the region'*.

The SIS Plan is intended to be regularly updated and has been based upon a comprehensive review of existing data and planning information, an audit of existing social infrastructure, anticipated impacts of major project developments, and identified gaps now and across the medium and long term horizon, with the development of strategies to address these gaps.

The approach of the study was also intended to provide capacity building in the local community to enable them to review and monitor the SIS Plan in line with the growth scenario achieved. It was also a project aim that a coordinating structure was left in place to stimulate the continuation of a follow-up or ongoing social infrastructure working group. This has occurred. In turn it was anticipated that this will catalyse the community development outcome of the SIS Plan.

A key anticipated outcome of the SIS Plan was that it would better inform any contributions to the regional social infrastructure capital base by current and future private sector industrial proponents considering the Gladstone region as a location to site a major project development, and additionally, would allow the Council and State Government, and other providers, to better prioritise scarce social infrastructure funds in line with identified priorities.

1.2 Strategic Aims and Goals

The primary objective of the SIS Plan was to identify any gaps in existing regional social infrastructure and develop priorities to guide future investment in social infrastructure, especially by industry.

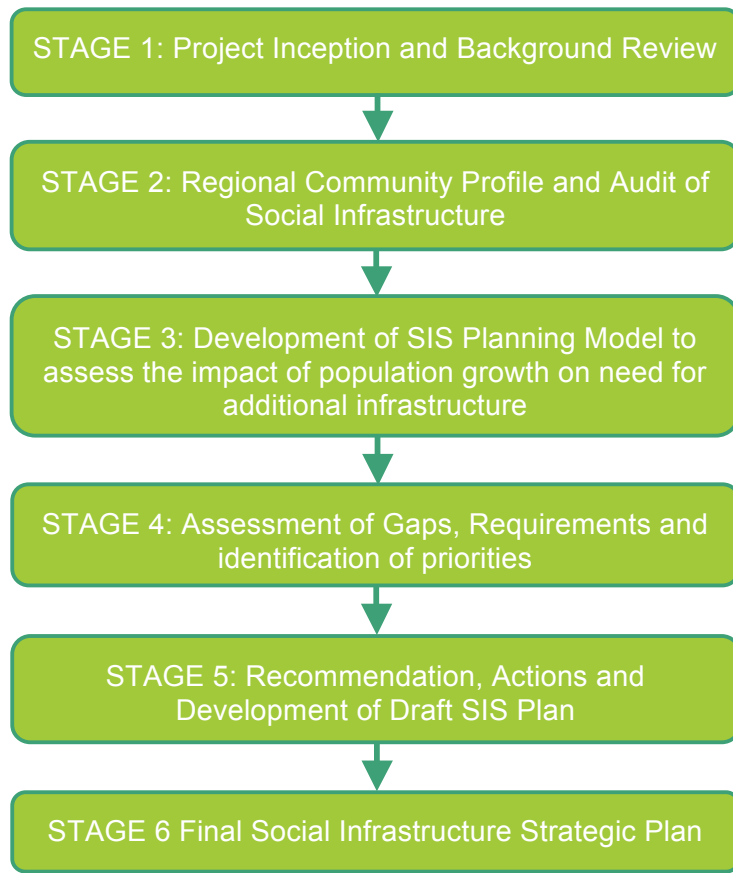
Its goals included the following:

- to stimulate investment in social infrastructure commensurate with growth;
- to use social infrastructure to enhance Gladstone as ‘a good place to work, live and raise a family’;
- to provide social infrastructure which supports the development of children, young people and the family, as the core unit of the community;
- to develop social infrastructure which provides for all aspects of the diversity of the region, including culture, income and age;
- to enable older residents in the community to age in their community with access to appropriate housing and support services;
- to reinforce the local feel and unique identities of particular towns and places through social infrastructure, while providing a coherent regional network of facilities and services;
- to plan and provide social infrastructure through partnerships and collaborative arrangements between government, industry, educational and community organisations;
- to empower local residents to help design and deliver self-sufficient local services as the region grows.

1.3 Methodology Overview

The study was guided through regular meetings with a Steering Committee, comprising representatives of DIP, GRC and GEIDB. Governmental involvement was facilitated through a series of meetings with the Gladstone Infrastructure Working Group (GIWG), comprising State agency and non-government group representatives. A Social Infrastructure Strategic Working Group was also established for the project comprising key local community sector representatives.

The methodology was a staged approach, with a total of six stages as follows:



2.0 BACKGROUND REVIEW

An extensive review of literature was conducted to document:

- existing social impacts of growth;
- potential future impacts of growth (and economic slowdown, if known);
- social infrastructure needs (for Gladstone Region, and the former Gladstone City, Miriam Vale and Calliope Shires).

These findings were tested at each stage of the Project.

Key existing and potential future social impacts of major industrial development and related growth identified in the literature review are summarised in the table below.

| Existing Situation | Predicted Future |
|--|--|
| Social Infrastructure (overview) | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parts of the region already experience shortfalls and backlogs in social infrastructure arising from previous major projects. • The cumulative effects of the various industrial projects are exerting pressures on available social services. • The increase in the number of people moving into the area has impacted on the ability of local people to access existing facilities and services. • These effects are more prominent in smaller communities which do not have the capacity to cope with the additional demand. • Services are not always available in outlying areas where difficulties exist in operating financially viable facilities and where public transport links to Gladstone are limited. • The region's development has increased demands for services in a number of different areas, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Health/medical services; ○ Mental health; ○ Children's services, including child care and child protection; ○ Youth development; ○ Family support (including Domestic Violence); ○ Affordable and crisis housing; ○ Counselling; ○ Disability support; ○ Migration/settlement support. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will continue to be increased demand for social infrastructure and pressure on existing community facilities and services as the region continues to grow and develop. • There will be demand for social infrastructure to cope with downturns as well as boom times (e.g. financial counselling, unemployment services, family breakdown). |

3.0 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

3.1 Industrial Development

The Gladstone Regional Council area is distinct from the rest of Queensland due to the significant scale of large industries and industrial development occurring within the Gladstone region that supports and contributes significantly to the whole Queensland economy.

This report has identified the range of existing industries, the future potential industries and the key mechanisms to support these industries such as the State Development Area and the Gladstone Port Corporation Ltd.

Such a large concentration of industries within one area has resultant implications for the region's demographic profile in relation to types of labour, incomes, housing, vehicle ownership and the like. This profile has been superimposed over an older existing community with different characteristics and needs to the newly arrived population of Gladstone. The Vision 2028 project (Futureye 2008) identified that the Gladstone Region is a relatively new community with one third of the population having lived in the Gladstone region for 10 years or less.

Continued accelerated growth at a higher level than the Fitzroy Statistical Division as a whole is forecast for the next two decades to 2031. Hence the nature of the community and therefore social infrastructure needs will continue to be heavily shaped by industrial development.

3.2 Settlement Pattern for the Gladstone Region

The Gladstone region has a population spread across a large area, and a rural base, with significant distances between main activity centres and outlying settlements.

The key growth areas that have been identified in Council's planning schemes include the Kirkwood area south of Gladstone City, a growth area to the south of Tannum Sands, the area to the west of Calliope, along with consolidation opportunities within Gladstone city and Agnes Water.

Due to the A-frame structure of Gladstone city there are implications for current accessibility to social infrastructure largely located in the traditional CBD area and implications for the future role of the Kin Kora centre for social infrastructure facilities and services given its location in proximity to most of the Gladstone residential areas.

Given the significant growth projected for Boyne Island/ Tannum Sands, and the current population established in this area, there are also significant implications for the provision of social infrastructure within these centres.

In addition, the role of Agnes Water has been identified as a district centre in the recently adopted planning scheme for the former Miriam Vale. Its growth will require consideration of the level of social infrastructure provided in that centre.

Finally, Gladstone Regional Council area depends heavily on the cities of Rockhampton and Bundaberg to provide higher levels of key services (particularly in regard to health, access to medical specialists and retail) than those provided in the Gladstone Regional Council area. The almost doubling of the Gladstone population will have implications for continued reliance on other centres and upon the provision of social infrastructure within the Gladstone region.

3.3 Demographic Profile

With respect to current and projected population data for the Gladstone Regional Council area (from Australian Bureau of Statistics' Census of Population and Housing 2006, and Planning Information Forecasting Unit's medium and high series 2008 Edition projections), key findings include the following:

- there have been growth rates since 1981 in excess of regional averages, resulting in rapid growth and community formation;
- if the medium population projections apply, the region will grow from 53,941 in 2006 to 98,041 in 2031. This is a total increase of 44,100 people or 81.8%;
- Gladstone will therefore be shouldering a higher proportion of the Fitzroy region's growth than the regional average;
- high series growth would result in a doubling of the population by 2031;
- by 2031 Gladstone will become a city virtually the current size of Rockhampton, and larger than the current Bundaberg; and
- there is projected to be a significant ageing of the population, resulting in an increase in lone person households and couple families without children.

In terms of key population and housing characteristics, Gladstone has:

- a strongly family oriented community, with a high proportion of all age groups 0-17, a high proportion of working adults and a high proportion of couple families with children;
- a lower proportion of people aged 50 years or more than the wider region or State as a result of the high proportion of those of working age;
- relatively low proportions of Indigenous people and people from non-English speaking backgrounds although many nationalities are represented;
- a transient population, with 49.7% of the population being based at another address five years previously;
- relatively high incomes, although 16.6% of the population earns less than \$500 per week;
- a work oriented community, with a low unemployment rate and high labour force participation rate;
- a low proportion of households owning their own home, and a high proportion purchasing their home i.e. a significant 'mortgage belt';
- a high proportion of separate houses and a low proportion of flats/units, indicating limited housing choice;
- low vacancy rates, resulting in high rents for flats and decreasing housing affordability;
- a high degree of car ownership/dependence.

3.4 Social Planning Catchments

The demographic catchment areas have been defined by Council and adopted as Social Planning Catchments for the SIS Plan to allow the implications for social infrastructure provision at a region-wide, local government area, and specific catchment-based levels to be determined for the purposes of benchmarking.

The Social Planning Catchments are an important element of the SIS Plan study in relation to determining social infrastructure needs and to assist in the provision of social infrastructure as a result of the study.

Most critical are population projections obtained by catchment area which forecast that:

- all catchments are projected to experience continued growth to 2031;
- in particular the catchment of Boyne Island/ Tannum Sands is expected to experience significant growth up to 2031, and will increase from a population base of currently 10,940 people, to 26,300 at 2031. This is nearly equivalent to the size of another city the same as the current Gladstone;
- Calliope will also experience very significant and rapid growth, increasing from a base of 3,760 in 2006 to 16,800 people in 2031;
- although its overall population will remain relatively low compared to the higher growth catchments, the catchment of Agnes Water - Seventeen Seventy is expected to experience high growth from a current 1,790 people to 6,800 people.

Within Gladstone city, Gladstone CBD will experience consolidation leading to a doubling of the population to 3,110 people, Clinton will increase substantially from 6,270 to 8,000 people; and New Auckland – Kirkwood will increase substantially from 4,280 to 6,180 people.

These areas will require social infrastructure commensurate with their growth – a continued dependence on Gladstone CBD for items of infrastructure will no longer suffice.

4.0 SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE AUDIT

An audit of existing social infrastructure throughout the region was undertaken. Initial observations arising from this audit were that:

- key regional community facilities and services are mainly located in Rockhampton;
- the existing provision of community facilities and services in the Gladstone region are predominantly focussed within the Gladstone CBD, although recreation facilities are more dispersed;
- there is a relatively poor provision of community facilities and services in outer suburbs of Gladstone city;
- there is a reasonable provision of social infrastructure in the outlying townships of the Gladstone region (e.g. Agnes Water and Miriam Vale) relative to their size, where many small centres are functioning in service provision roles beyond the level their population would suggest; and
- there is limited social infrastructure in small rural or coastal villages.

5.0 BENCHMARKING METHODOLOGY

Benchmarking is a process used to quantitatively determine the level of provision of facilities which may be present in a community compared to generally accepted rates of provision. Benchmarks are expressed as a ratio of facility: population (e.g. 1 facility to 5,000 people (or 1:5,000)).

In line with best practice, for the purposes of this study, only built facilities were benchmarked. Social services and networks were assessed separately as benchmarks for these items vary substantially and therefore are better informed by inductive processes, particularly consultation.

It is important to note that the findings of the benchmark model alone should not be considered an accurate reflection of needs in Gladstone. They represent a theoretical, quantitative approach to assessing need only. As such they were only one of the inputs to identifying need. The outcomes identified from the benchmarking model were then validated and 'ground truthed' through the next stage of the project process (see Section 6).

6.0 NEEDS ASSESSMENT

6.1 Methodology

The purpose of the needs assessment within the SIS Plan process was to:

- identify ‘gaps’ between the existing provision of social infrastructure and the requirements identified in the (benchmarking) model;
- confirm needs for the future provision of social infrastructure.

The needs assessment process synthesised all outputs of the study to date, including:

- the review of findings of previous studies;
- the demographic profile;
- the social infrastructure audit;
- the outputs of the benchmarking model;
- the outcomes of a programme of community and agency consultation.

The outcomes of consultation are contained in a separate report.

A summary of the needs assessment was released for further stakeholder comment and community consultation. The full document was made available for validation to relevant agencies such as Council and State government departments. The findings should not be considered indicative of government or service providers’ intentions or policies, nor should they create any expectation that they will occur. A further summation of the key findings from the extensive needs assessment is documented below in section 6.2.

6.2 Summary of Key Findings

6.2.1 Health and Wellbeing

Hospital Services

- Need to resolve the difficulty of travelling to Rockhampton;
- Industrial development may warrant some higher order services e.g. Accident and Emergency, and Intensive Care;
- A clear need to attract and retain health and allied health specialists;
- By 2031, a large increase in beds will be required to serve the residents of GRC;
- Emergence of Gladstone LGA as the same size as the current Rockhampton will warrant a significantly larger hospital and associated higher service levels;
- A multi campus model should be considered.

Community Health

- A regional health precinct needed at Gladstone by 2031;
- A community health centre needed at Boyne Island /Tannum Sands by 2021, and a small centre at Calliope by 2031;
- A small community facility needed at Turkey Beach which could be used by health services;
- Need for certainty of ongoing funding for the Discovery Coast Community Health Services.

Allied Health

- Strategies needed for attracting and retaining staff in Gladstone: particularly speech therapists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, psychologists and counsellors;
- Strategies in liaison with TAFE and Central Queensland University (CQU) to train allied health professionals in short supply in Gladstone;
- Generally to expand and make counselling services more available.

Medical Practitioners and Specialists

- Additional specialists currently required including: further gynaecologist/ obstetrician; psychiatrist; paediatrician; fulltime ear, nose and throat specialist;
- More acute oncology services; renal dialysis services and some inpatient mental health beds required in Gladstone;
- The proposed GP SuperClinic is highly needed;
- Need for weekend, after hours and bulk billing GP services;
- Telehealth arrangements should be considered to service outlying communities.

6.2.2 Education, Employment and Training

Schools

- An analysis of school needs was undertaken by Department of Education and Training (DET);
- Many existing school facilities have capacity for increasing enrolments and/or expansion and the significant number of private schooling facilities will also assist in accommodating future demand;
- More detailed planning will be required into the adequacy of existing school facilities to accommodate the future population of growth areas to 2031;
- The need for provision of a full high school to year 10 or 12 to serve Agnes Water and Miriam Vale should be further assessed by DET.

TAFE – Central Queensland Institute of TAFE

- High level facilities for TAFE (and CQU) are seen as essential social infrastructure to support the long term development of industry in Gladstone;
- Existing TAFE facility may need to be upgraded to a district level campus;
- New smaller level TAFE facility considered in Boyne Island/ Tannum Sands;
- Additional ‘satellite’ vocational training centres could be considered in existing community centres in Miriam Vale, Calliope, and Agnes Water.

University

- Without Gladstone’s level of industrial development, a university of this size would not be typically expected;
- CQU has advised that overall facilities are sufficient except for a new Centre of Environmental Management that is required;
- More support and greater partnerships with industry are required;
- Need for a cultural shift for younger people to seek higher education;
- Opportunity for further investment in research and development facilities to create a real educational hub in Gladstone – potential for training ‘green collar workers’.

Education and Employment Training Services

- Implementation of Clever Recruiting Gladstone study;
- Provision of transport to training and work placements;
- Addressing of gender issues and more/better opportunities for females;
- Targeting of areas of employment that are growing e.g. construction;
- Funding for literacy and numeracy programs is needed;
- Support for projects like the Pathways Project that encourage culture change to enter university.

6.2.3 Children’s and Family Facilities and Services

Pre-schools/Child Care Facilities

- Highly possible that high rates of demand for both kindergarten places and long day care are experienced as a result of the special characteristics of the workforce and high labour force participation rates;
- Slight current under provision of preschool kindergartens and several additional facilities required in the future, particularly in Calliope;
- Support of community demand for a second kindergarten at Tannum Sands;
- Shortage of long day child care places – and centres will need to double to meet future need in growth areas by 2031;
- Other issues include flexible care for shiftworkers (high priority), nursery places and places for 3.5-4 year olds.

Targeted Children’s Services

- Significant shortage of Outside of School Hours Care;
- Shortage of family day care due to lack of available carers;
- A critical lack of early intervention programs and lack of external and social supports for families;
- Strong need for a Children's and Family Centre providing soft entry to integrated and mobile preventative, treatment and referral services;
- Need for consideration of Work Based Child Care Centres or industry to purchase places in existing centres.

6.2.4 Youth Facilities and Services

- Gladstone PCYC needs to be revitalised/expanded to provide a ‘youth hub’ with appropriate programs and activities;
- A second youth centre in Gladstone, one in Boyne Island/Tannum Sands, and possibly one in Calliope by 2031;
- Youth spaces should be considered for Agnes Water and Miriam Vale, and additional facilities for youth at Tannum Sands along the beach and at the Kin Kora shopping centre;
- More places to go – e.g. a food court, beach facilities – and a youth bus to get there;
- Skate parks are slightly underprovided and more required in the future;
- More coordinated information about youth activities and services available in appropriate forums (e.g. Facebook and MySpace);
- Increased youth homelessness resources and programs;
- Need for more youth workers and recurrent funding.

6.2.5 Disability Facilities and Services

- Most significant need is for additional respite, e.g. a second purpose built 24/7 respite facility;
- More staff training and retention of qualified staff;
- Respite for clients with high care needs and for ageing carers;
- Improved disabled access;
- Suitable housing for people with disabilities, purpose built residential facilities/group homes and more accommodation support services;
- More programs and support services needed to assist children with disabilities in mainstream schools;
- Additional Home and Community Care (HACC) services needed, particularly appropriate day respite, transport, transitional care and services in rural locations;
- Mental health services, particularly acute mental health beds, for people with disabilities;
- Greater industry involvement in training and employment for people with disabilities.

6.2.6 Aged Persons' Facilities and Services

Day Respite Centres

- A 'desperate' need for day respite in Gladstone;
- Need for another centre needed possibly in association with the development of an aged residential care facility within Gladstone;
- A future additional centre required in Boyne Island/ Tannum Sands.

Services

- HACC services in the region are generally strained for the elderly and people with disabilities;
- Recruitment, retention and training of staff is an issue;
- There is a lack of awareness of services amongst older people;
- Transport and HACC services in rural areas are key needs.

6.2.7 Community Facilities and Services

Facilities

- Need for meeting places in small communities, as well as facilities such as men's sheds, picnic sheds and shelters throughout the region;
- Need to create new neighbourhood foci in new suburbs;
- Development of a one-stop community / neighbourhood centre at a centralised location like Kin Kora required;
- In the future, a larger centre or a second smaller community centre at Boyne Island/Tannum Sands.

Services

- Need to capacity build local organisations to provide services from Gladstone rather than Rockhampton;
- Programs that capacity build, increase self-sufficiency or foster social interaction will be increasingly important as the community grows;
- Need for funding to continue key Communities for Children initiatives.

6.2.8 Cultural Facilities and Services

Libraries

- Number and distribution of library branches is appropriate;
- As the population grows expansion in some branches may be required especially Boyne Island /Tannum Sands and Calliope;
- The Central library should be able to support future regional population;
- Services to the Rural West (Boyne Valley) require further consideration or a mobile service could be considered;
- Library stock and technology need to remain current.

Performing Arts

- Upgrading existing Entertainment Centre for long term needs is appropriate;
- Smaller performing arts spaces required long term (for Gladstone urban area, Boyne Island /Tannum Sands and permanent facilities in Calliope).

Other

- Expansion of the Regional Art Gallery and Museum will be required to serve future populations;
- A dedicated outreach gallery in Boyne Island /Tannum Sands will be warranted;
- An Arts Development Space including rehearsal space, exhibition space, and wet and dry workshop space should be considered.

6.2.9 Multicultural Facilities and Services

- Need for a Multicultural Resource Centre, possibly as part of the proposed community centre;
- Consider local programs to address issues in schools;
- More multicultural / cultural diversity training and integration of multicultural values in child care centres, schools and industry;
- More sponsorship of multicultural events;
- Formalised arrangement for interpreters;
- Education programs for spouses of multicultural workers.

6.2.10 Indigenous Facilities and Services

- Difficulty in accessing private rental accommodation due to competitiveness in the housing market needs to be addressed;
- Health care services provided by Nhulundu Wooribah requires more GPs and a larger facility;
- Need for improved processes for engagement with local Indigenous people;
- Support for the proposed 'Murri Centre' (co-location of services).

6.2.11 Recreation and Sporting Facilities and Services

Children's Playground

- Significant increase in play facilities required in growth areas to meet the needs to 2031;
- An ongoing program to improve the quality of existing playground facilities across the region;
- Improved pedestrian linkages and safe access to parks is needed.

Sporting Facilities

- Slight oversupply of sporting land (approx 12 ha in Gladstone) but additional 21ha required by 2026;
- Many ovals/sports grounds are small and local in nature and standard and issues with level of facilities; limited opportunities for some major sporting competitions;
- High standard multi field complex or complexes supported in Gladstone built over next 20yrs;
- Consultation with all codes to determine masterplans for each complex;
- A schedule of capital upgrades to maintain & improve existing sporting facilities should be developed;
- Further access to school court facilities and multi-use courts should be investigated.

Multipurpose Leisure Centre/Aquatic Centre & Pool

- Support upgrade at Gladstone Aquatic Centre to increase family fun orientation of the centre;
- Public swimming pool at Boyne Island/ Tannum Sands ahead of benchmarked population.

Indoor Sports Centre

- There is no high standard multipurpose indoor sports centre;
- The long term feasibility of such a facility that will also cater to the needs of shiftworkers should be investigated;
- There is potential for development of indoor sports centre within a multi-sporting complex.

Recreation Parks

- Undersupply of recreation land in Gladstone & surrounds;
- 33ha of land needed by 2026 however, many demands could be met through upgrade, enhancement, development of existing open space;
- Requires a rolling program of park improvements;
- Investigate the opportunity for a second city park such as the Byelle Wetlands;
- Improved recreational facilities for young people in outer Gladstone, Calliope, Tannum Sands & former Miriam Vale shire as population grows;
- Redevelopment of Barney Point to world class facility with possible industry contribution;
- Investigate the long term possible connection of the CBD Waterfront with Barney Point;
- Extend or reinforce Gladstone's greenbelt to separate growth areas.

Bikeways/Pedestrian Recreation Trails

- Further awareness and promotion of the Round Gladstone Trail;
- Additional trails linking points of interest, and trails through the proposed greenbelt expansion to link urban centres and outer suburbs;
- Improvements to existing trails (facilities such as water, toilets, bike parking), and new trails required to respond to growing demand for outdoor recreation;
- A regional facility for trail bikes within the Benaraby Raceway Master Plan.

BMX Tracks

- Adequate for current needs, however, another track may be required by 2031;
- Possible provision in medium/long term in Boyne Island/Tannum Sands.

Dog Parks

- Current provision very low across the GRC area;
- Up to 5 future dog park facilities should be identified.

6.2.12 Public Transport

- Overall, bus services that are more frequent and operate on weekends and better service a range of priority groups (for example, youth, aged, health care patients) are needed;
- Improved access between the railway station to Gladstone urban area and airport to key centres in the Gladstone region;
- A need for consideration of the issue of access between Gladstone and Rockhampton and its effect on access to regional services;
- Resolution of the Kin Kora interchange problems;
- Promote existing networks and encourage cycling to employment centres;
- Improved pedestrian connections for new developments to established destinations;
- Cycleways to major employment centres such as Yarwun and Boyne Island/Tannum Sands;
- Development of a bike play and education facility;
- Walking and cycling upgrades identified in open space studies;
- Update of Gladstone Integrated Regional Transport Plan (GIRTP) to support future population projections.

6.2.13 Police and Emergency Facilities and Services

Police

- Potentially a need to expand and possibly relocate Gladstone Police Station to another more accessible/appropriate site;
- Develop a new base for Gladstone Water Police;
- Planned rebuilding of Calliope Police Station to take account of future growth;
- Possible need to expand Tannum Sands police station;
- Consideration of increased police presence in Baffle Creek;
- Industry expansion may generate additional requirements for emergency response;
- Police staffing ratio better than regional comparatives but aspire to a higher level of service.

Justice Facilities

- Existing courts require minor refurbishment and expansion may be required in the medium to longer term.

Fire and Rescue

- Expansion of the existing Gladstone Fire Station may be required to meet projected population needs by 2031;
- Upgrading of Boyne Island /Tannum Sands Fire Station from auxiliary to full time manned may be required with growth.

Ambulance

- Sufficient ambulance stations in the Gladstone region up to 2031;
- Possible expansion (or relocation) of the existing Gladstone Ambulance Station may be needed by 2031;
- The Calliope station may need to be upgraded in the medium term.

6.2.14 Housing

- Critical need to establish a housing ‘safety net’;
- Need for a significant increase in the supply of public and community housing;
- Crisis accommodation for extended families, Indigenous people, single men and young people;
- Transitional housing to support people exiting crisis accommodation and boarding houses;
- Rental support service to assist people who find it difficult to secure a tenancy and competitiveness for private rentals;
- A need for diversity and affordability in the private housing market;
- Access to private rental housing and public and supported accommodation for indigenous persons;
- Significant initiatives are occurring, but could also include:
 - Rent Connect Officer;
 - Industry involvement under the National Rental Affordability Scheme.

Aged Persons Accommodation

- Significant need for affordable and ‘tri-care’ residential facilities in Gladstone, Miriam Vale, Agnes Water and Calliope;
- Improved awareness around CACPs and other services available to older people in rural locations;
- Additional residential care beds, particularly low care and dementia beds;
- Greater housing choice including smaller dwellings and low set housing;
- Universal designed housing;
- Strong support for the development of a retirement village concept put forward by the Gladstone Retirement Village Committee.

7.0 RECOMMENDED ACTION

Subsequent to needs being further validated through a consultation process, a set of priorities was identified in the Stage 5 Opportunities Framework report.

The actions developed were derived directly from the opportunities identified in the needs assessment. Given the scope of the report, it has not been possible to establish the feasibility or viability of every opportunity. Hence some recommended actions have been framed as ‘for further investigation’ or ‘for further consideration’ of the responsible authority or partners. The opportunities identified have been based on the best assessment of likely needs within the scope of the study.

The Stage 5 Opportunities Framework will be provided to members of the Gladstone Infrastructure Working Group for further validation and assessment before being considered and addressed through their respective agency’s budget processes. As part of this process, more detailed costing information will need to be carried out on each priority item.

8.0 PROPOSED FUNDING MECHANISMS

A separate study was undertaken during the course of this project and the outcome of this was the development of a Priority Social Infrastructure Schedule for Industry and the establishment of an industry pooled fund to address the items in the Schedule.

The Stage 5 Opportunities Framework report contains a list of items that will be addressed by members of the Gladstone Infrastructure Working Group. These items will be funded from the normal budgetary processes of Federal, State and Local Government.

9.0 RECOMMENDED COORDINATION MECHANISMS

The Opportunities Framework report was developed to improve the provision of social infrastructure and therefore community health and wellbeing in the Gladstone region.

It is recommended that an advisory group such as (in our view) the SIS Plan Working Group be continued and be involved in informing decision-making in relation to needs and priorities.

Stronger community involvement and co-ordinated intergovernmental input through the Gladstone Infrastructure Working Group, currently convened by the Department of Infrastructure and Planning, in relation to social infrastructure is also recommended.

It is also recommended that a formal Community Relations Industry Group be convened by industry to provide a mechanism by which the joint action of major industries can be coordinated and maximised; and that a six monthly meeting of the overarching interagency be held which is attended by representation from the Gladstone Infrastructure Working Group and the Community Relations Industry Group to update participants, identify emerging needs and discuss progress under the Opportunities Framework.

10.0 RECOMMENDED MONITORING MECHANISMS

The SIS Plan requires monitoring, and this will be one of the duties of a SIS Plan Implementation Manager. There are two ways in which this should occur:

- review of the implementation of the Opportunities Framework, including the collection and expenditure of funds; and
- evaluation of the effect that the plan is having (or may be having) on the community health and wellbeing.

10.1 Evaluation of Community Health and Wellbeing

While it will clearly not be possible to link cause and effect in terms of the effect of the SIS Plan, monitoring of some key and readily obtainable social indicators for the community that have been developed will provide guidance to decision makers on the state of community health and wellbeing, and may allow the plan to be adjusted accordingly, if necessary.

10.2 Review of Plan Implementation

It is important that the SIS Plan be monitored to ensure that:

- actions are achieved;
- priorities remain appropriate; and
- achievement of priorities is occurring in a timely fashion.

At the end of each timing period (short/medium/long term), a review of the Opportunities Framework and the currency of recommended actions and costings should be undertaken by the SIS Plan Implementation Manager.