

# Cook Shire Council Community Plan 2011-2021 Project Overview

September 2010



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# **Cook Shire Community Plan 2011-2021**

## **Project Overview**

### ***Introduction***

Cook Shire is moving forward while continuing to offer and maintain a beautiful and relaxed setting.

In the last decade, Cook Shire has embraced the economic benefits of tourism with enthusiasm and optimism. With the further expansion of this industry Cook Shire will continue to grow and prosper. Also complementing our economic portfolio are the significant industries of mining, primary production, building and construction, and public administration activities which Council is keen to progress in a sustainable manner.

Cook Shire has a strong cultural and social fabric reflecting the challenges of living in this remote and varied landscape. There is a spirit of independence from the outside world but also of mutual support within our communities. There are issues but there are also many opportunities in our shire and working together, using our local ingenuity and skills will be an important part in developing sustainable solutions.

### **What is it**

The community plan is a 10 year high level plan for the Cook Shire that identifies community needs and articulates the Council's and community's long-term vision, aspirations and priorities for the community. A community plan is a 'whole of community' plan not just local government, it includes a wide range of stakeholders and all levels of government.

The purpose of the community plan is to:

- inform longer-term decisions to be made by Council in relation to policy, planning and resource allocation;
- complement, guide and inform Council's other strategic planning systems and decision-making such as the planning schemes;
- capture the expertise, interests and views of stakeholders representing the whole of the community (government, business, interest groups, individuals and community organisations) into a framework that describes how the community aspires to reach its full potential;
- provide a means of informing other levels of government about our aspirations;
- provide a basis for transparency and accountability for the development and implementation of other operational and action plans.

### **Legislative requirement**

The Local Government Act 2009 has an increased emphasis on planning and accountability requiring every council to develop a long term community plan. The legislation places importance on community engagement as part of the process of developing the community plan. The Local Government (Finance, Plans and Reporting) Regulation 2010 requires council to prepare and adopt a community engagement policy.

The community plan when supported by the long term financial plan, the asset management plan and the planning scheme will be the key driver for the five year corporate plan and will influence all other plans of council.

### **Planning approach**

Cook Shire Council is adopting a 'place based' approach to the community engagement process and the community plan development in order to ensure the unique character of each area is recognised. Information will be collected across Cook Shire and engagement activities are planned for Bloomfield, Rossville, Cooktown, Marton, Lakeland, Laura, and Coen. Those unable to attend activities will have the opportunity to be involved through mail, Internet and telephone. Equity groups (such as youth, indigenous, disabilities) will be represented on the project reference group (see terms of reference) and sector interests (such as mining, tourism, child care, education) will be canvassed in specific sector engagement activities. Each locality will have a Councillor as champion. The plan will be developed in consultation with the Queensland and Australian governments and other key community and stakeholder groups.

### **Cook Shire profile**

The estimated resident population for Cook Shire at 30 June 2008 was 3,812. 40% (1,515) of the population live in Cooktown which is the administrative, commercial and service centre for the shire. The balance of the population is spread between small localities 7.4% and rural 54%. The trend is for the population to increase although very slowly. Migration is a significant factor limiting growth. The Cook Shire population is older than the Queensland population average and it is aging more rapidly.

Cook Shire is characterised by small and very small businesses. The main industries by employee numbers are: agriculture, forestry and fishing industries; accommodation and food services; and public administration and safety.

Cook Shire covers 106,000 sq km of a total of 137,000 sq km for Cape York Peninsula, however, land tenures are subject to considerable change as land is acquired by government for national parks and Native Title determinations.

Potentially significant factors in the future of Cook Shire include the proposal for World Heritage listing of part of Cape York Peninsula, the mining expansion on western Cape York and a major green energy development proposal at Archer Point.

Cook Shire adjoins the Aboriginal Shires of Wujal Wujal, Hope Vale, Lockhart River, Aurukun, Kowanyama, Pormpuraaw, Mapoon, Napranum and the Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council; the Cairns and Tablelands Regional Councils and the Weipa Town Authority.

### ***Project Aim***

Consultation will be conducted to identify priorities for the future of Cook Shire in the areas of:

- **Social wellbeing.** Incorporates issues relating to how active participation in community life can contribute to the cultural, spiritual, emotional and physical wellbeing of individuals in the community.
- **Economic development.** Incorporates issues relating to economic growth, prosperity and financial sustainability
- **Environmental management.** Incorporates issues relating to the built and natural environments and what action is required to protect our assets and plan for growth.
- **Governance.** Incorporates issues relating to local government and relationships with other levels of government in order to be accountable and effective.

The community plan:

- will be developed with comprehensive community input;
- will not duplicate consultations but will utilise existing plans and consultations where appropriate e.g. The Cooktown & Environs Youth Plan;
- is multi-issue and will cover all community issues (such as health education, main roads) not just those that are the business of Council;
- is not about replacing decision making by democratically elected councillors. Councillors have the final say on the Corporate Plan and budget planning for issues of council responsibility that will be informed by the community plan;
- is for 10 years.

The community engagement strategy will provide opportunities for residents and stakeholders to plan for their localities, sectors and the whole of Cook Shire for the next 10 years. The intent is to ensure that all members of the community, including those who are hard to reach, can have their say and that there are opportunities for community input through all stages of the development of the community plan.

Information collected during the consultation phase will be used to inform other plans such as the long term financial and asset management plans, the Cook Shire planning schemes, and the long term Tourism Investment and Infrastructure plan. This is being done for reasons of efficiency, to avoid over consultation of the community, and to ensure information is consistent across these core documents.

The community plan will be informed by and have linkages to non Council plans and initiatives such as Laura and Coen Negotiation Tables, Native Title, Indigenous Land Use Agreements and Land Management Plans.

Cook Shire Council will engage with Queensland Government and Australian Government to identify existing and future priorities for the shire and region.

Public participation will be bench marked at a minimum 70% of the adult population of Cook Shire.

Cook Shire Council intends to adopt the community plan by September 2011 and submit it to the Queensland Government prior to December 2011. Engagement activities are planned to take place over the wet season as people are more likely to have time to participate, however, it is recognised that access may be an issue at this

time and there will need to be flexibility in the timing of activities to work around this.

## **Project Management**

### **Project timeframes**

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Project overview	May 2010
Funding approval	July 2010
Project commencement and project reference group established	September 2010
Project plan and engagement strategy approved and staff appointed	October 2010
Desktop research and preparation of community and shire profiles	September –October 2010
Engagement strategy implemented	November-March 2011
Draft report	April-May 2011
Review process by community and stakeholders	June-July 2011
Final report adopted by Council, disseminated to community.	September 2011
Cook Shire Community Plan 2011-2021 submitted to Queensland Government	November 2011
Annual review	September 2012
Four year update	September 2015

\*Subject to change in the event of unexpected circumstances.

### **Project budget**

A budget of \$134,704 has been approved for the 2010-2011 financial year to develop the community plan. This will cover wages for 1 FTE project officer, travel and accommodation, administration and promotion costs, venue and equipment hire, and facilitator fees and allowances.

### **Communication strategy**

A communications strategy will be implemented to keep all stakeholders informed and involved as the project progresses from September 2010-September 2011. It will include:

- project reference group meetings;
- Cook Shire Council staff consultation meetings;
- updates in the staff newsletter “Cook and Bull”;
- community plan e-newsletter;
- updates in the Cooktown Local News and Noticeboard; and
- Cook Shire Council website with interactive community plan page.

## ***Community Planning Framework***

The framework includes:

- community planning with residents across Cook Shire;
- community of interest planning with sectors.

People will be asked to think about what is important for their district, sector and region over the next 10 years and plan how they can achieve or address these in terms of:

**Issues**--What needs to change? What needs to stay the same?

**Assets**--What do we already have (natural, built and human systems and capacities) to help us achieve what we believe is important for our district/sector/region over the next 10 years.

**Opportunities**--What are the opportunities for our district/sector/region?

**Constraints**--What is limiting our district/sector/region?

The steps in the planning approach are:

- collate existing information;
- talk with people and organizations;
- community validation and prioritization;
- draft plan and feedback;
- final Cook Shire Community Plan 2011-2021.

The Cook Shire Community Plan will comprise locality profiles, and a whole of shire profile and plan that describes who we are and identifies high level issues and strategies for addressing these issues.

## ***Community Engagement Strategy***

We will provide multiple ways for people to participate in the development of the community plan. Our aim is for 70% of the adult population to participate in at least one engagement activity. Engagement methods may include the following:

- information dissemination using printed material, online, information booths and presentations to community groups;
- semi-structured interviews face to face and by telephone;
- surveys online and hardcopy mail out;
- small group meetings;
- workshops;
- public meetings;
- feedback opportunities;
- drawing activities for children to show what they want to see when they grow up.

## **Review of Community Plan**

The Cook Shire Community Plan will be reviewed annually by the Cook Shire Council to ensure that it takes account of emerging issues and changing circumstances. A major update will be carried out every four years.

## **Risk Assessment and Management**

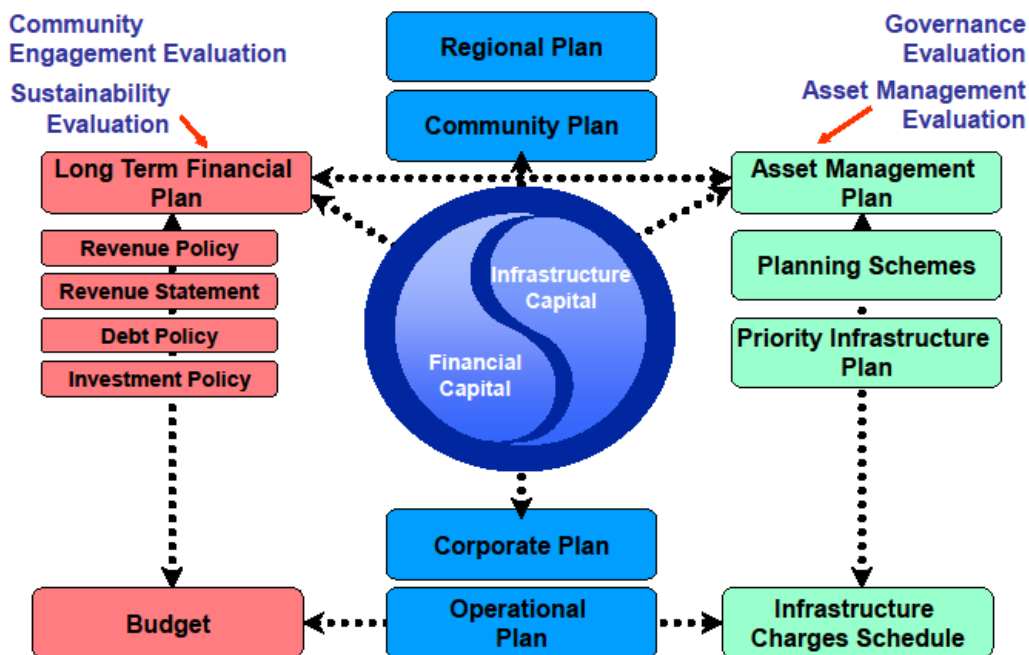
<b>Risk</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Action to reduce risk</b>
Community does not feel that they were 'engaged'	High	We will provide multiple modes and opportunities for engagement throughout the length of the project. We will visit localities at least once. We will publish the benchmarks for engagement and the timetable of engagement activities. We will monitor engagement activities and be prepared to revise them
Engagement fatigue	Moderate	We will work closely with other Council departments and use the internal communications strategy to ensure that information can be shared across the other Council plans under development. We will coordinate with other key stakeholders to ensure we do not duplicate consultations. We will piggy-back engagement activities on local events and meetings where possible.
Budget over-run	Moderate	Detailed budget is prepared for all activities. Budget is reviewed regularly.
Weather. The Cook Shire is subject road closures during the wet season. Cyclones are a possibility	Low	An extended period for engagement has been allowed so that there is opportunity to visit each locality when weather permits. A range of engagement techniques will be used that do not depend on physical access, such as telephone, mail and internet. The extended period for engagement lowers the risk that we will not be able to contact community members.
Staff turn-over	Low	Detailed project plan and regular reporting.



## Alignment of Planning Processes

The following model developed by the Department of Infrastructure and Planning shows the linkages between the various local government and legislative planning processes.

In addition to the statutory plans identified below Cook Shire Council will be using information gathered during the community plan process for the long term Tourism Investment and Infrastructure Plan and the new Planning scheme. It should be noted that Cook Shire is not included in a regional plan.



## Conclusion

The community plan will capitalise on or enhance existing activities of council and local organisations. It will provide the framework for new strategies to address gaps and emerging issues. It will influence the development of other issues and area action plans not just at local government level but also at higher levels of government.

The community plan is a living document and Council will monitor progress against strategies or actions and report back to the community and to state government.

## Acknowledgements

Cook Shire Council would like to acknowledge the assistance of Glenys Pilat, author of Tablelands Community Plan 2021: Planning Our Future Together. Overview of Tablelands Community Plan 2021 Project Plan (2010).

### ***Works Consulted***

Cook Shire Council website [www.cook.qld.gov.au](http://www.cook.qld.gov.au)

Local Government Association of Queensland (2010) Community Plan: Development Guide. [www.lgaq.asn.au](http://www.lgaq.asn.au)

Queensland Department of Infrastructure and Planning Local Government Act 2009 and Regulations [www.dip.qld.gov.au/local-government/legislation-for-local-government.html](http://www.dip.qld.gov.au/local-government/legislation-for-local-government.html)