

MAPOON ABORIGINAL SHIRE COUNCIL COMMUNITY PLAN 2010-2020

Adopted 18 May 2010

ABOUT THIS PLAN

The Community Plan expresses the views of the people of Mapoon and the Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council about how the community and the area should develop over the ten year period from 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2020.

The plan set out the issues which face the Mapoon over the period and how they should be addressed. It also provides a vision of how Mapoon should look at the end of the period covered.

PREPARATION PROCESS

The Plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the draft Local Government (Finance, Plans and Reporting) Regulation 2009. The preparation plan commenced with Council preparing a document to assist the community in understanding the process and identifying the issues to be addressed. This document was distributed to every household in the area.

A Community Meeting was called on 9 March 2010. This was attended by 35 people (13.5% of the population). The meeting discussed the issues under the headings set out in the paper. The issues raised at the meeting and the proposals put forward are incorporated in the plan.

Members of the community were also invited to provide further input in writing or in discussion, to the Mayor, CEO, Deputy CEO or the consultant. (1 Submission was received).

Council then discussed the issues at a meeting on 14 March 2009 and informally between meetings. Additional matters were raised which are included in the plan.

The Council Identified strategies required to implement the plan, performance indicators for measuring its progress, and the impact on its other long term plans.

A draft plan was prepared meeting the requirements under the Local Government Act 2009 and the draft Local Government (Finance, Plans and Reporting) Regulation 2009. The Council approved this plan for public discussion on 14 March, 2010.

The Draft plan was then made available to the community for discussion and comment from 23 April to 10 May 2010.

No further submissions were received. The Council then adopted the plan at a General Council Meeting on 18 May 2010.

REVISION PROCESS

The plan can be revised by Council. If the revision is minor, no further consultation is required. If a major revision is required the Council must engage with the community in accordance with its policy.

If the plan is revised, notice will be given to the community in accordance with the Council's Communication Policy.

No revisions have yet been made.

The Council may prepare a new Community Plan to replace this one at any time by following the procedure in the Act.

THE VISION

The Community of Mapoon in 2020 will be characterised as follows:

- Thriving, prosperous and healthy
- High level of employment and participation in training
- Population about 400
- Approximately 100 good quality, well maintained, houses with responsible tenancies which also supports Home Ownership aspirations
- Mainly indigenous population with a historical connection or family ties with Mapoon
- A Democratic community with input from traditional owners and other residents
- A caring community, particularly caring for the elderly and young people
- Respect and care for the environment
- Strengthening and supporting traditional culture
- Businesses which fit in with the culture and generate funds inflow.

ISSUES CONSIDERED

The plan considers issues under a range of headings below. The issues cover the major matters of concern to the community and matters impacting on Council's operations.

ISSUE: GOVERNANCE

The Council is an elected body that is responsible for the good rule and government of a part of Queensland (its area). This is provided for in the constitution of Queensland 2001, section 71. As well as the individual rights of members of the community, the traditional owners of the land and the trustees of the Mapoon Deed of Grant in Trust (DOGIT) land on which the council is situated also have an interest.

These groups need to work together to ensure the area is properly governed and managed and to provide an appropriate and sustainable environment for the community.

The community of Mapoon is a community with a small population but compared with other indigenous Councils the town area is large and housing density is therefore low. Currently there is a lack of employment opportunity in Mapoon and high unemployment level and low incomes. The Council, in exercising the government of the area has to take into account the special needs and cultural issues affecting the community. It also needs to obtain appropriate funding from outside the community as the community itself is not able to provide for all its needs.

DESIRED OUTCOME

The Community is led by the Council which has the support of all family groups and other residents.

The Council is:

- proactive in achieving benefits for the community
- open, accountable and consultative
- financially and practically sustainable.

STEPS TO ACHIEVE THIS

- Increase consultation and community engagement
- Regular newsletter for community
- Effectively plan and monitor performance
- Develop and meet financial targets

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Measure	Target	Date
Surveyed Community members are satisfied that they have been involved and consulted in the planning and management of council business	80% of respondents	annually
Plans meet legislative requirements	100%	30 June 2011 onwards
Production and circulation of community newsletters	10	annually
Council Financial Plan in place and monitored monthly	-	30 June 2011 onwards

ISSUE: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

The community depends on an inflow of funds from outside. In part this arises from Grants made to the Council or to other community bodies and in part from Centrelink payments made to residents. If businesses that generate income from outside the community can be established and developed they will improve the community economy and enable additional services to be made available. They will also provide employment for members of the community and may directly make additional facilities available.

The community wishes to maintain its cultural identity and to avoid the negative impact some businesses could have. Business development which is sympathetic to the culture and environment is therefore preferred.

DESIRED OUTCOME

New Businesses are established and/or developed in Mapoon which generate a substantial inflow of funds to the community.

Employment opportunities for residents are increased.

New enterprises do not detract from the lifestyle or impact adversely on the environment.

Proposed possible businesses:

- Laundromat
- Take-away
- Residential Cultural and Environmental Centre
- Horse riding
- Fishing
- Bird watching
- Crocodile tours
- Arts and crafts
- Coconut plantation
- Lease contractors' dongas and commercial accommodation

STEPS TO ACHIEVE THIS

- Develop concepts for suitable new businesses
- Develop or encourage businesses under Council control or with appropriate people
- Develop eco-tourism options
- Participate in the negotiation of Mining leases impacting on the Mapoon DOGIT and monitor the impact of current and proposed mining operations on the community and environment

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Measure	Target	Date
Size of new and expanded enterprises within Mapoon*	\$1M+ turnover per year	2014
	\$4M+ turnover per year	2020
Plan for Business development	Complete	2012
Implementation of business development	Depends on plan	Annual

* This is the turnover of the new business – not the income to the community or to Council from the business.

ISSUE: ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

The area includes a significant area which is in its original natural state. This environment needs to be carefully managed by the Council, the trustees, traditional owners and the wider community working in partnership to avoid its destruction by a range of threats including:

- pests and weeds, including feral animals
- tourist activity
- natural disasters
- industrial and commercial activities

A number of threats have been identified which are not adequately managed at the present time. The Council needs to introduce Local laws and management methods to constrain these threats and protect the environment.

The community also wishes to improve the immediate environment of the town for increased safety and amenity.

DESIRED OUTCOME

All community land is protected

Establishment of a Mapoon Land Trust

Ranger service maintained

Natural Resource Management Plan maintained and implemented

Local Laws to establish permit system for

- Access by Quad Bikes and off Road vehicles
- Fishing (bag limits, control of netting areas)
- Hunting
- Cats and Dogs
- Horses

Number of horses controlled

Street lighting

Clean and tidy place

STEPS TO ACHIEVE THIS

- Continue to seek and manage funding for environment
- Implement and maintain the Natural Resource Management Plan

- Conduct survey of Mapoon residents to ascertain community views on appropriate control measures for feral animals.
- Introduce relevant local laws
- Consider methods of controlling horses
- Work with stakeholders on Land and Sea issues
- Access funding for street lighting
- Education program to achieve tidiness
- Review current visitor management

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Measure	Target	Date
Funds acquired for Land and Sea	\$600,000 per year (Increase with inflation)	Each year
NRM Plan implementation (Measures as specified in plan)		Ongoing
Survey conducted	complete	2011
Identified local laws implemented	Complete	2011
Town area has tidy appearance	Complete	Each year

ISSUE: HOUSING

The Council provides houses for rental to members of the community. These houses are situated on the DOGIT land. Currently the State Government pays for the construction and maintenance of the houses which are managed by Council.

NEW STATE GOVERNMENT PROCESS

- The State Government is introducing a new process for managing the houses. This appears to result in the community having a reduced say in the management and allocation of the houses, a significant increase in rents, and a reduced size of the housing made available.
- The proposed system may not recognise traditional family land occupation and other traditional rights.
- The proposed State Government allocation method aims to be more structured and transparent.

In order to achieve equity between community members it is essential that all tenants pay their rents on time. Currently some of the tenants have significant arrears.

DESIRED OUTCOME

Enough houses should be provided to house the anticipated population of 400 without overcrowding. This means approximately 30 new houses will be required over the ten year period of the plan.

The houses should be provided as an absolute priority to existing community members (including people with a historic association with the community and relatives of existing members).

The needs of families should be recognised in determining house size and allocation.

Mapoon Council with community should determine the allocation of houses in Mapoon without restriction.

Community members should be able to buy their houses on long term leases and resell them to community members. The pricing should be reasonable, based on the rent payable for the house (economic value) rather than the cost of constructing a new house.

Confusing road names and house numbering should be corrected.

Community members whose houses were burned down when the community was forcibly removed from Mapoon consider that they should receive compensation for this loss.

STEPS TO ACHIEVE THIS

- Council to lobby government to adapt housing scheme so it recognises the cultural and social realities of the community.
- Council to investigate alternatives to handing over housing function to State Government.
- Town plan to provide for required new housing and associated infrastructure.
- Road naming and numbering to be resolved
- Council to support action by residents to obtain compensation
- Develop an ILUA between Council and Traditional Owners regarding the Mapoon town area as part of the Mapoon Planning Scheme
- Native Title determination finalised

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Measure	Target	Date
Number of new houses provided	5 new houses	2013
	4 per year	2014-20
Agreement with State Government on issues raised		2012
Town plan reflects community expectations		2011
A Mapoon town area ILUA developed	Completed	2011
Native Title Recognised		2020

ISSUE: EDUCATION

Mainstream education for primary and secondary age children is provided by Education Queensland at a primary school in Mapoon and at a secondary school in Weipa with weekly boarding arrangements.

The community needs additional provision for the care and schooling of pre-school children to ensure they achieve learning readiness for school and to enable the parents to take up employment opportunities.

Some additional support is needed to enable some children to maintain the pace of school.

Adult education opportunities in the community would enhance the lives and earning opportunities for community members.

DESIRED OUTCOME

For pre-school age

- Early Learning Centre established

For school aged

- Tutoring available for children
- All children go to high school
- Transport service from Mapoon to Weipa
- Take up of available bursaries

For adults

- Basic numeracy/literacy in Mapoon
- Arts and crafts
- Domestic science
- Parenting skills
- Take up of available bursaries

STEPS TO ACHIEVE THIS

- Build and open early learning centre
- Men's and Women's groups and P&C to advocate and coordinate improvements
- TAFE and CEA to establish appropriate adult training courses
- Promote available bursary opportunities

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Measure	Target	Date
Early Learning Centre established	established	2011
Early Learning Centre attendance	18	2011 onwards
Tutoring availability	Established	2011
Tutoring takeup – number of children	4	2012 onwards
Number of Adult courses available	4	2012
Number of adults attending classes	10	2013 onwards
Number of secondary and tertiary bursaries granted	2 per year	2011 onwards

ISSUE: HEALTH AND AGED CARE

The Community is serviced by a clinic that provides basic services and is visited by a doctor once or twice per week. More advanced services and dentistry are provided in Weipa. There is no maternity facility in Mapoon or Weipa and expectant mothers have to go to Cairns for pre-natal care and for the birth.

These services are provided by Queensland Health and Apunipima.

As with other indigenous communities the standard of health in Mapoon is well below that of mainstream communities. There is widespread diabetes and obesity and obesity related diseases.

Mapoon is a pilot community in the establishment of a Community controlled health care model which resulted from engagement of the Mapoon Health Action Team (HAT).

There appears to be little physical exercise taken. The climate may be a deterrent. Awareness of health outcomes could undoubtedly be improved. The spread out community also makes it difficult to provide centralised opportunities for exercise.

Alcohol and drug related behaviour problems are also an issue.

DESIRED OUTCOME

Improvements to services

- Bigger clinic
- Increase in doctor visits complemented by a wider range of specialist services
- More frequent regular dental services visit Mapoon
- More ambulance drivers with better wages
- First Aid courses
- Better HACC services
- Respite centre
- Aged care facility
- Free phones or free call number to clinic
- Alcohol and drug treatment facilities

Improvements to health

- Health awareness
- More community approach to health
- Sport participation
- Swimming pool

STEPS TO ACHIEVE THIS

- Council to continue to lobby Qld health for improved services
- Council to discuss phone provision with Telstra
- Investigate feasibility of a community swimming pool and kids play (wet) area
- Improve Sport and Recreation hall
 - Improved security
 - Furnish and man office
 - Regular events
- Develop and fence playing fields

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Measure	Target	Date
Improved health – as measured by Qld health		
Sport Program participation as measured by program coordinator	15% active	annual
Alcohol and drugs – Community engagement as measured by program coordinator		

ISSUE: JUSTICE

The Community Justice Group's role is to monitor the treatment of offenders, make recommendations to the court about appropriate sentencing, and to encourage measures to reduce crime in the community.

The Council is concerned about the level of crime (mainly drug and alcohol fuelled) in the community, particularly where it impacts council property.

Alcohol control in the community is by the imposition of carriage limits. These prescribe limits to the amount and type of liquor that can be carried in a vehicle. It is known that liquor not permitted is consumed in the community (heavy beer, spirits, etc.) however, the possession of these in the community is not policed. Alcohol is known to increase the amount of crime and also increases health risks and creates dependency. It also impacts on employability and the functioning of family units.

The consumption of excessive quantities of alcohol and drugs may, in part, result from the limited opportunities for legitimate entertainment in the community. This particularly affects young people.

DESIRED OUTCOME

Reduced alcohol consumption/dependency/crime

Justice group continues and gets own building

Justice group plays stronger role in resolving local domestic disputes.

Speed bumps outside clinic/school

Diversionary activities (e.g. educational opportunities, entertainment, sport, community based counselling, etc.)

STEPS TO ACHIEVE THIS

- Get carriage limits better enforced
- Continue to fund Justice Group
- Justice group to set up arrangement to resolve domestic disputes
- Seek funds for Justice Group building
- Establish youth club and/or holiday activities
- Adopt appropriate Local Laws
- Introduction of the JP Magistrates Court
- Incorporation of Justice Group

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Measure	Target	Date
Number of meetings of Justice Group	10 per year	Annually
Improvement in situation	As determined by Alcohol Reform Task Force	
Continued funding of Justice Group		Annually
Community satisfied that available activities are sufficient	60% of respondents	Annually
Alcohol free events	2-4 per year	Annually
Percentage of community resident court appearances attended by Justice Group	90%	Annually
Local Laws relating to justice issues adopted		2011
Justice Group Incorporated		2012
JP Magistrates Court sitting in Mapoon		2015

ISSUE: INFRASTRUCTURE

The Council provides and maintains the infrastructure for the community. This includes the roads and water supply system and would include a sewerage system if one was provided.

The main road from Weipa is partly sealed where it is within the Council area. Some official roads remain as yet unsealed.

The water supply system has recently been upgraded.

There is no sewerage system at the present time. All houses have septic tanks.

DESIRED OUTCOME

The main Weipa road should be sealed to the Council boundary.

A town plan will be developed which will identify the official roads. Some unofficial roads which are not sealed will not be recognised by Mapoon Council in the future.

A sewerage system is provided.

STEPS TO ACHIEVE THIS

- Complete Mapoon Town Plan
- Seal part of the road each year
- Plan for sewerage the area

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Measure	Target	Date
Town Plan completed		2011
Length of Weipa Road sealed	2 km per year	Annually until complete
Plan for sewerage completed		2014
Sewerage complete		2020

ISSUE: REVENUE RAISING

Council is inevitably financially constrained. It is not able to raise rates due to the nature of land tenure. The rents charged to the tenants are very low, and payment is unreliable.

The main income of the Council is State and Federal Government Grants. These tend to be for capital works or specific projects and some need matching contributions from Council. Before accepting a grant Council has to assess the real lifetime cost of the grant-aided project including operating cost and asset maintenance and replacement.

Planning for grant income is problematic. Most grants are only available for a very limited period and can be withdrawn very suddenly. The Council can only identify its needs, anticipate sufficient grant income to meet the needs, and hope that government will provide a grant to enable it to carry out the necessary work.

The cost of administering grants and grant aided projects is significant and Council is endeavouring to identify these costs and ensure they are factored into grant applications and acquittals.

Another source of income is work carried out for government departments building and maintaining properties; this includes an administration cost element and provides needed employment for community members. Seasonal contract work is also carried out at times for Main Roads Department, Rio-Tinto Alcan and Cook Shire Council.

Council has the power to levy fees on residents, or utility charges for specific services provided. The fee does not have to relate to specific services. A Utility charge could be levied for waste management and water.

DESIRED OUTCOME

Council has enough revenue to provide the desired services

STEPS TO ACHIEVE THIS

- Prepare Council Financial Plan and budget based on Community and Corporate Plans
- Increase effectiveness in obtaining grants
- Increase effectiveness in collecting rents and other revenue
- Consider imposing utility charges or fees
- Look for other revenue sources.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Measure	Target	Date
Council financial plan and budget prepared	Completed by legislated dates	Each year
Revenue is adequate to provide desired Council services		Each year
Increased grants obtained	As required for services	Each year
Other sources established		
Rent arrears reduced	>5%	Each year
Department financial sustainability measures met	All	Each year