

Planning Scheme Policy 12 - Social and Economic Impact Assessment

12.1 Purpose

- (1) Social and Economic Impact Assessment is a process of investigating the possible effects of a development proposal or project on one or all of the following -
 - (a) people's way of life - how they live, work, play and interact with one another on a day to day basis;
 - (b) the culture of the affected community - its shared beliefs, customs and values;
 - (c) the nature of the affected community - its cohesion, stability, character, services and facilities;
 - (d) the business function of the affected community.
- (2) The purpose of the Social and Economic Impact Assessment is to -
 - (a) assist in establishing full facts about the development to support a well informed decision about the appropriateness of the development proposal;
 - (b) minimise adverse impacts and maximise beneficial impacts of the development;
 - (c) inform the community and facilitate participation by the community in the planning and development assessment process;
 - (d) facilitate the consideration of alternative development proposals;
 - (e) determine the need for such a proposal;
 - (f) enhance existing data to inform the planning and development assessment process.
- (3) In preparing a Social and/or Economic Impact Assessment report, community consultation may also be requested. Planning Scheme Policy 2 - Community Consultation recommends how this consultation is to be undertaken.
- (4) To enhance the smooth and efficient assessment of development proposals, applicants are encouraged to provide additional information up front as part of their development application in the form of a Social and/or Economic Impact Report and Social Impact Management Plan, if necessary.
- (5) This policy has two parts -
 - (a) Social Impact Assessment;
 - (b) Economic Impact Assessment.

The local government may request either or both of these assessments dependent on the proposal.

12.2 Applicability of Social Assessment Policy

- (1) Additional information, in the form of a Social Impact Assessment Report will be requested by the assessment manager and/or a referral agency to assist in assessing proposals that have the potential for significant community impacts.
- (2) In determining whether a Social Impact Report will be requested, consideration will be given to -
 - (a) the scale, complexity, time frame and nature of the proposal;
 - (b) issues likely to be relevant to the proposal;
 - (c) the degree of significance of the identified issues, such as the number of people or size of the area likely to be affected;
 - (d) the communities likely to be affected by the proposal.
- (3) Following is a list of circumstances where a Social Impact Assessment request could be made -
 - (a) when the development is not clearly envisaged or where there is some doubt as to whether the development is clearly envisaged by the planning scheme;

- (b) when a development is likely to significantly alter the need for community facilities and/or services;
- (c) when a development is likely to result in an unanticipated significant change to the existing character and identity of a community;
- (d) when a development is likely to result in a significant change in population characteristics of the area affected by the development;
- (e) when a development is likely to have a high level of controversy or political sensitivity;
- (f) where the preparation of a structure plan, concept plan, master plan or plan of development is considered necessary by the local government or is required by the planning scheme in view of the scale, intensity or complexity of the development project;
- (g) where a development is likely to impact on the health or safety of an area;
- (h) where a development will result in reduced accessibility;
- (i) development that may impact on particular target groups including indigenous people, children, aged people, people with disabilities and non-English speaking people;
- (j) development resulting in a change in the hours or pattern of activity, psychological amenity or other factors associated with a use that may impact on the amenity of an area;
- (k) development resulting in an imbalance of an activity or particular population group in an area, such as a licensed premises or aged housing;
- (l) any other circumstances where the local government considers that a Social Impact Assessment is appropriate before a development can be adequately considered, or where there is likely to be significant community concern.

(4) Uses where additional information may be requested -

- (a) major new housing estates such as urban expansion, infill or renewal sites that may result in significant changes to existing character and population, the development of large self-contained new communities, or developments that will significantly impact on the demand for community services and facilities infrastructure;
- (b) the establishment of new, or significant alterations to existing, major institutions and public venues, including educational, health, defence, sporting and multi-purpose venues;
- (c) the establishment of new centres, retail or commercial premises in out-of-centre locations, health care centres or significant alteration to existing centres;
- (d) when a development involves public works associated with the development of the movement system where the works are likely to impact on neighbourhood accessibility, character and amenity;
- (e) development of indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, such as amusement parks theme parks or sporting facilities;
- (f) specialist housing, including aged persons housing, emergency housing and hostels;
- (g) uses adjoining a community services facility;
- (h) child care facility;
- (i) establishment of educational facilities, community facilities including libraries and recreational facilities;
- (j) industrial development that may impact on amenity or health such as through the generation of traffic, environmental emissions or safety issues;
- (k) licensed premises such as hotel "General Licence" as defined under the *Liquor Act 1992*;
- (l) places for youth activities;
- (m) place of worship;
- (n) tourist uses such as a tourist park or tourist accommodation.

12.3 Social Impact Report

- (1) The Social Impact Report is intended to provide detailed information about the proposal, the potential community impacts, and the measures proposed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts. The report consists of two parts -
 - (a) the main text of the document that is written in a clear and concise manner that is readily understood by general readers;
 - (b) the appendices that contain detailed technical information.

Note -

The information requested by the assessment manager and/or referral agencies to be included in the Social Impact Report will vary for each individual development proposal. Applicants are encouraged to consult with the local government and/or the Department of Local Government and Planning prior to lodgement of an application likely to require a Social and/or Economic Impact Report for confirmation of the range of details to be included and issues to be addressed by the report.

- (2) In determining the level of detail that should be included in the Social Impact Report, consideration is given to -
 - (a) how important the issues appear to be to the affected community;
 - (b) the likelihood of there being serious social consequences or potential future conflict if the matters are not addressed;
 - (c) the likelihood of the issues being impacted on by the proposed development;
 - (d) the examination of issues that are practical and achievable;
 - (e) how reasonable and appropriate the issues are to the development.
- (3) This policy demonstrates the issues and degree of detail needed in a Social Impact Report. However, it should not be misconstrued that all these details will be requested for every application requiring a Social Impact Report. The matters to be addressed by the proponent will generally be selected from the following generic guidelines and tailored to the individual application's type and complexity.
- (4) The report could include the following contents -
 - (a) Report Preparation;
 - (b) Summary and Conclusions;
 - (c) Scoping Potential Community Impacts;
 - (d) Document Existing Conditions;
 - (e) Predicting Community Impacts;
 - (f) Assessing Likely Impacts;
 - (g) Mitigating, Enhancing, Managing and Monitoring.

12.3.1 Report Preparation

Details of the educational qualifications and experience of the person preparing the Social Impact Report, including a list of Social Impact Reports they have completed.

12.3.2 Summary and Conclusions

- (1) The summary is easily read but at the same time conveys a thorough understanding of the project and its community implications. The information may conveniently be arranged under the following headings -
 - (a) Site location - give a brief description of the site and surrounding areas including the location of associated infrastructure development and figures/maps of all locations;
 - (b) Project description - summarise the objectives of the project, proposals for the construction and operation of the project, and associated infrastructure developments;
 - (c) Alternatives to proposed development - summarise the features of alternatives investigated, and detail the reasons for choosing the preferred option;
 - (d) The existing social environment - summarise the features of the existing community relating to the proposed development and associated infrastructure;
 - (e) The predicted community impacts - summarise the range and level of potential impacts of the project, including cumulative impacts, both beneficial and detrimental, and any alternatives, on the existing or future community;

- (f) The communities likely to be affected - outline the existing and future communities likely to be affected by the immediate and long term impacts of the project in a local, City-wide and/or regional context;
- (g) The response proposed to deal with the predicted impacts - summarise the strategies and amendments proposed to minimise any adverse impacts and maximise the community benefit of the proposal, and the safeguards and management procedures proposed to minimise ongoing and/or future impacts on the community;
- (h) The affected community's perspective of the proposed responses - summarise the process of gaining the community's perspective on these responses, their feedback and how this feedback has been considered;
- (i) Documentation of the methods and rationale for the conclusions reached - summarise the process of determining the study recommendations;
- (j) The measures taken to advise affected communities of the Social Impact Assessment results - summarise the consultation program utilised;
- (k) Conclusions - summarise the key strategies and amendments to the proposal to address any adverse community impacts.

12.3.3 Scoping Potential Community Impacts

- (1) The first step in Social Impact Assessment is to identify the scope of the assessment needed. This is done by consulting with key stakeholders in the community including minority and majority stakeholders to -
 - (a) identify issues likely to be relevant to the proposal;
 - (b) identify the communities likely to be affected by the proposal, including existing communities, adjacent communities, communities of interest, service providers, new communities, employees and visitors;
 - (c) determine the degree of significance of the identified issues, including the perspective of the affected communities.
- (2) Ensure that this process is accessible to the full range of interest groups likely to be affected and take into account the needs of future generations who may be impacted on by the development.
- (3) The extent of consultation required in scoping the assessment will be influenced by the significance of impacts anticipated if the development were to proceed.

12.3.4 Document Existing Conditions

- (1) The second step in Social Impact Assessment is to document existing conditions, including historical trends, relevant to the issues identified in the first step. This will provide baseline data against which subsequent social changes can be assessed.
- (2) Technical and consultative methods should be used in establishing the required data. The range of information that could be relevant is outlined in Table 1. This is not an exhaustive list and professional judgement is needed to ensure that only information relevant to the application should be provided.
- (3) A guide to baseline information for documenting existing social conditions is shown over.

Table 1 - Relevant Information

Community Impact Type	Relevant Baseline Information On Existing Social Conditions
Accessibility (including visitability)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Existing patterns of access and mobility ■ Vehicular, pedestrian and bike movement ■ Public transport ■ Private vehicle ownership
Demographic change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Age distribution ■ Ethnicity ■ Nature of households and families ■ Income and employment ■ Growth forecasts
Community Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Perceptions of amenity ■ Cohesiveness of the community ■ Crime and safety levels/perceptions of safety ■ Places of local significance/local landmarks ■ Aspects of sense of place ■ Level of activity by community organisations ■ Existing cultural/social patterns and networks ■ Health statistics ■ Levels of and environmental emissions - air, noise, water, odour
Service and/or Facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Availability and capacity of existing services and facilities, such as halls, churches, libraries, community centres, recreation facilities, education places, health services, social support services ■ Ability of the community to fund the development or expansion of new infrastructure ■ Opportunities for co-locating services/facilities ■ Known intentions of service/facility providers such as State Government
Cultural heritage and Indigenous issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Important places ■ Cultural characteristics, events and practices ■ Cultural values
Development trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Nature of development ■ Location ■ Effects of similar types of development in the area ■ Past development activity and trends
Economic trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Employment/unemployment (current status and trends) ■ Nature and location of employment ■ Income ■ Local business development (current status and trends) ■ Nature of skills/level of education
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Housing supply ■ Housing type ■ Tenure of housing, ownership, rental, private/public ■ Cost of housing (purchase and rental) ■ Housing to meet particular community, such as boarding houses, emergency housing
Groups with particular needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Availability/capacity of services required to support the needs of people with particular needs, such as older people, people with disabilities, non-English speaking people, indigenous people, workers, residents and visitors

12.3.5 Predicting Community Impacts

- (1) Predict the likely impacts of the development proposal and alternatives to the proposal, including a 'no development' scenario. This section should identify -
 - (a) the changes that would occur if the development went ahead;
 - (b) who is likely to be affected by the development and in what way;
 - (c) the changes that would occur if the development did not proceed;
 - (d) the community impacts likely to occur during the construction and operational phases of the development;
 - (e) any cumulative impacts.

- (2) Historical trends affecting the community, and the experience of impacts arising from similar developments elsewhere should be taken into account as part of this step.

- (3) The following provides a guide to matters to be considered in predicting community impacts -
 - (a) impacts on the population size and structure, such as where itinerant employees may be involved during the construction phase. This information should be assessed for both construction and operational phases;
 - (b) impacts on the social, cultural, economic and employment profile;
 - (c) impacts on current community service provision, capacity, changes in demand to infrastructure (hard and soft) and community access to these services;
 - (d) impacts on the demand for and accessibility to community services and facilities;
 - (e) impacts on community values, lifestyle and aspirations;
 - (f) impacts on places of social value such as local landmarks and other places of heritage significance, places of public activity and the character of the area, physical and social;
 - (g) impacts on the sense of place and identity;
 - (h) the ability of local people to participate in employment opportunities and local business and economic development opportunities;
 - (i) traffic and environmental emission impacts for construction and operational stages;
 - (j) impacts of lighting on existing and future neighbouring uses;
 - (k) impacts of lighting, landscaping, accessibility and other aspects of the design on perceptions of personal safety and crime levels;
 - (l) level of accessibility to the site, in the site and between sites;
 - (m) adequacy of access to public transport, pedestrian and bike facilities, as well as private vehicular access;
 - (n) housing choice and location appropriate to meet forecast housing need, including affordable housing and any specialised housing needs;
 - (o) impacts on housing cost;
 - (p) integration of the development with surrounding uses;
 - (q) implications for local government finances, both revenue and expenditure;
 - (r) impacts on crime levels and the perception of safety;
 - (s) issues involving the integration of incoming residents/employees with the existing community and community activities;
 - (t) the community likely to be affected and the nature of the effects;
 - (u) infrastructure likely to be affected and the nature of the effects;
 - (v) how long the impacts are likely to last;
 - (w) the level of social change that is likely to occur.

- (4) Some typical community impacts of development that should be assessed include -
 - (a) alteration to housing choice and mix;
 - (b) availability of support services for people with particular needs, such as older people and people with disabilities;
 - (c) changes in community activity;
 - (d) changes to accessibility;
 - (e) changes to cultural activities and places;
 - (f) character and amenity impacts;
 - (g) community safety impacts;
 - (h) community severance;
 - (i) disempowering groups or individuals through change;
 - (j) changed levels of employment access and opportunities;

- (k) financial gain/loss to the community;
- (l) local economic and business development;
- (m) health effects;
- (n) impacts arising from inappropriate location and design;
- (o) need for community services and/or facilities;
- (p) population change;
- (q) sense of place and identity impacts.

(5) These possible impacts are described by development type in Table 2.

Table 2 - Possible Impacts

Development Type	Possible Impacts / Issues
Areas undergoing transition and emerging communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Demographic change ■ Community issues: character and amenity; sense of place and identity; community safety and health effects. ■ Economic issues: employment access and opportunities and local economic development. ■ Housing: housing choice and mix; housing supply; housing for special needs groups. ■ Service and/or facility requirements: need for community services and/or facilities. ■ Groups with particular needs: availability of support services. ■ Other: cumulative effects.
Community facilities (including community facility, places of worship, cultural centres, youth centres and child care centres)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Community issues: accessibility including visitability; character and amenity; community safety; and health effects. ■ Cultural and heritage issues: cultural activities and places; needs of indigenous people; and needs of non-English speaking people. ■ Groups with particular needs: needs of children and youth; needs of older people; and needs of people with disabilities. ■ Service and/or facility requirements: integration of services/facilities; and appropriateness of design and location. ■ Other: appropriateness of design and location.
Major Indoor and outdoor recreation facilities and public venues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Community issues: accessibility including visitability; character and amenity; sense of place and identity; community safety, and health effects. ■ Service and/or facility requirements: relationship to centres. ■ Other: appropriateness of location and design.
Housing development that significantly changes population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Demographic Change ■ Community issues: accessibility including visitability; character and amenity, sense of place/identity; and community severance. ■ Cultural and heritage issues: cultural activities or places. ■ Economic issues: employment access and opportunities; and local economic development. ■ Housing issues: housing choice and mix; housing appropriate to meet known needs; housing for special needs groups; housing supply; appropriateness of housing; and availability of support services if special needs groups are involved. ■ Service and/or facility requirements ■ Other: appropriateness of design and location.
Housing for special needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Community issues: accessibility, including visitability. ■ Housing issues: availability of support services/facilities. ■ Other: appropriateness of design and location.

Social and Economic Impact Assessment

Development Type	Possible Impacts / Issues
Industrial premises new or expansion of existing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Community issues: accessibility, including visitability, character and amenity; community severance; community safety; and health effects ■ Economic issues: employment access and opportunities; and local economic development. ■ Service and/or facility requirements ■ Other: cumulative effects.
Infill development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Demographic Change ■ Community issues: accessibility (including visitability); character and amenity; sense of place/identity; community severance; community safety. ■ Cultural and heritage issues: cultural activities and places. ■ Housing issues: housing choice and mix; housing appropriate to meet known need; housing for special needs populations; housing supply; and appropriateness of housing. ■ Service and/or facility requirements: need for community services and/or facilities. ■ Other: cumulative effects.
Institutions, hospitals etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Community issues: accessibility, including visitability; character and amenity; sense of place and identity; community safety; health effects; and integration with existing community. ■ Service and/or facility requirements: relationship to centres. ■ Other: appropriateness of location and design such as human scale.
Residential reconfiguration, or other large housing developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Demographic Change ■ Community issues: accessibility, including visitability; character and amenity, sense of place/identity; and community severance. ■ Cultural and heritage issues: cultural activities or places. ■ Housing issues: housing choice and mix; housing appropriate to meet known needs; housing for special needs groups; housing supply; appropriateness of housing; and availability of support services if special needs groups are involved. ■ Service and/or facility requirements ■ Other: appropriateness of design and location.
Multiple dwellings or apartment buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Demographic Change ■ Community issues: accessibility, including visitability; character and amenity; sense of place/identity; and community severance. ■ Cultural and heritage issues: cultural activities or places. ■ Housing issues: housing choice and mix; housing appropriate to meet known needs; housing for special needs groups; housing supply appropriateness of housing; and availability of support services if special needs groups are involved. ■ Service and/or facility requirements ■ Other: appropriateness of design and location.

Development Type	Possible Impacts / Issues
Centre development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Community issues: accessibility, including visitability; character and amenity; sense of place and identity; community severance; and community safety. ■ Cultural and heritage issues: cultural activities and places; economic issues. ■ Service and/or facility requirements: integration of services/facilities; groups with particular needs. ■ Other: appropriateness of design and location.
Park Residential development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Demographic Change ■ Community issues: accessibility (including visitability); character and amenity; sense of place/identity; and community development severance. ■ Cultural and heritage issues: cultural activities or places. ■ Service and/or facility requirements
Indoor and outdoor recreation facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Community issues: accessibility, including visitability; character and amenity; sense of place and identity; community severance, and community safety. ■ Cultural and heritage issues: cultural activities and places. ■ Economic issues: employment access and opportunities; and local economic development. ■ Groups with particular needs
Tourist and entertainment developments (including motels, tourist accommodation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Community issues: accessibility, including visitability, character and amenity; sense of place and identity; community developments severance; and community safety (including motels and pleasure activities). ■ Cultural and heritage issues: cultural activities and places. ■ Economic issues: employment access and opportunities, and local economic development. ■ Service and/or facility requirements ■ Groups with particular needs
Transport infrastructure (including roads, busway facilities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Community issues: accessibility, including visitability, character and amenity; community severance; community safety; and health effects. ■ Groups with particular needs: children, and people with disabilities.
Community facilities such as youth centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Community issues: accessibility, including visitability, character and amenity. ■ Other: appropriateness of design and location.

12.3.6 Assessing the Likely Impacts

- (1) Assess the level of importance of the predicted impacts and examine the responses that could help avoid or minimise the negative impacts and promote the positive impacts of the development, taking into account alternative proposals.
- (2) Considerations in determining the significance of community impacts include -
 - (a) the number of people likely to be affected;
 - (b) principles of social justice such as equity, access, fairness, inter-generational impacts;
 - (c) the extent to which the interests of the community as a whole are enhanced or sustained;
 - (d) the degree of change likely to arise as a result of the development relative to the existing circumstances;
 - (e) the duration of the impact;

- (f) the importance of the objectives of the plan;
- (g) the level of controversy anticipated;
- (h) whether or not the impacts would represent a good planning outcome.

12.3.7 Mitigating, Enhancing, Managing and Monitoring

Provide documentation of, and justification for, the strategies proposed for mitigating, enhancing, managing and monitoring the predicted impacts. This could be through the completion of a Social Impact Management Plan.

12.4 Social Impact Management Plans

- (1) Once a Social Impact Management Plan has been approved by the local government, the development will be carried out in accordance with this approved plan.
- (2) A Social Impact Management Plan may be requested, in order to document measures to be implemented to manage the predicted impacts of a proposal. These can apply for the life of the project, including construction and operational stages. The plan should establish -
 - (a) requested levels of performance for the development;
 - (b) a monitoring regime for checking performance;
 - (c) strategies for rectifying any diversion from (a) and (b).
- (3) The information requested by the assessment manager and/or referral agencies to be included in the Social Impact Management Plan will vary for each individual development proposal, and may deal with the management of one or a number of impacts. The content of the plan will vary depending on the nature and scale of the development, the characteristics of the site and the surrounding community, and the impacts generated by each proposal. This is necessary, as an approach used to deal with an impact on one site may not necessarily be appropriate for other sites due to different community characteristics.
- (4) The plan details the management strategies to be implemented for identified impacts and may be requested to include all stages of development as well as monitoring, corrective actions and complaint response. The plan should also include specific performance indicators.
- (5) The plan should demonstrate the commitments made to community impact management by specifying -
 - (a) all potential impacts;
 - (b) performance criteria establishing acceptable levels of impact;
 - (c) mitigating strategies for minimising identified impacts;
 - (d) monitoring and reporting processes to enable performance against the performance criteria to be measured;
 - (e) a contingency plan or corrective actions to be implemented if an undesirable or unforeseen level of impact occurs;
 - (f) procedures for monitoring and reporting and periodic review and updating of the plan.

12.5 Reference Material

- (1) Useful references that may assist in preparing the Social Impact Report or Management Plan are the following documents which are available from the Local Government Association of Queensland -
 - (a) *Social Planning Guidelines for Queensland Local Government*, (Colin Menzies, 1996);
 - (b) *Social Impact Assessment for Queensland Local Government*, (Wendy Bell and Andrew Jones).

12.6 Applicability of Economic Impact Assessment Policy

- (1) An Economic Impact Assessment Report may be required as part of a Social Impact Assessment process or in support of a development application involving -
- (a) any commercial activity outside a centre above 250m² gross floor area; or
 - (b) any major development outside of the preferred zoning considered necessary by the local government.

Note -

For the purpose of this policy, a commercial activity includes all uses categorised under Commercial in the note attached to Part 9 - Schedule 3 - Dictionary.

- (2) The purpose of the Economic Impact Assessment Report is to -
- (a) provide information on the proposal;
 - (b) determine the potential economic impacts of the proposal;
 - (c) determine the community need and impact on the planning scheme.
- (3) The Economic Impact Assessment Report will include -
- (a) identification of the catchment of the retail and commercial development and the existing centres within the catchment;
 - (b) identification of the extent of existing commercial floor space and approved new commercial floor space in the area likely to be serviced by the proposed facility and in surrounding areas which could be affected by it. It should be ascertained whether the proposal would create an excess of commercial floor space in the catchment;
 - (c) estimation of the demand, or likely future demand, for commercial floor space in the catchment area;
 - (d) estimation of expenditure available within the defined catchment or study area;
 - (e) estimation of the turnover of existing centres within the catchment area which are likely to be affected by a new development;
 - (f) estimation of the turnover of the new development;
 - (g) identification of the changing trends in shopping and other behavior relating to community needs which may affect the proposal;
 - (h) estimation of the quantum of consumer retail spending available in the catchment area which will be diverted from the existing centre to the new retail development. This assessment will highlight the locational source of spending by zone and in more complex urban catchment areas specify the source of spending by zone.

Social and Economic Impact Assessment

**this page purposely
left blank**