

**Hunter Liveability Forum (held 16 February, 2012)
Workshop Notes**

Workshop theme: Building Liveability in the Hunter - identifying priority areas

1. What does liveability mean for you in the Hunter?

Access to services: health, education, etc.

- Needs strategic planning across geographical & Local Government areas
- Planning for the future to provide certainty for communities

Connectivity

- Walking paths
- Cycle ways
- Public transport options
- Review of taxi services

Open Spaces

- Consider the rate of change

Involving the community in planning issues (engagement)

Finding examples (case studies) that provide benchmarking

- Other councils (ROC's)

Sustainable, viable economically, connective-socially and infrastructure

Integrated uses

Balance in the planning process

Confidence in the future – community, councils and governments and policies and changes in policies and the business sector

Transport facilities – network:

- road & railway
- public transport

Open space – green space for people – people friendly, convenient and safe

3 ideas

- Connectivity – Transport & sharing
- Sense of belonging
- Integrated community – service integration

Services

Accessibility

Attractive & Diverse

- Unique

Response when beautiful

Functionality for all community members

Multi-purpose/share facilities

- Pool
- Playground

Sense of worthwhile

NOT congested

Sydney not liveable:

- Noisy
- Less belonging
- Too long to destinations
- Affordability

Newcastle is affordable

Access to local doctors and health services

Open Spaces

Parks

Sporting facilities

Footpaths

Transport system

- Public

Cycle ways

Access to facilities

Shops

Safe

Infrastructure

- Housing diversity
- Choice in living conditions
- Ageing in place

Social

- Hubs
- Schools
- Sports clubs
- Church
- Support groups

Improving the lives of those people who live in those communities – inclusiveness

Devote time to look at the big picture and long term

Vibe of that city – pick a theme

Diversity of housing to accommodate ageing population

Walkability

Importance of connectivity & informal community activities

Accessibility

What does your community want?

- consultation with city
- active city engagement

Social connectedness

Creating opportunities

Tangible sense of community

Environment – interaction

Accessibility

Relative proximity

Planning legislation

Integration of all aspects into liveability

How happy community members are

Community spirit in smaller locations

Connectedness of the community i.e. how accessible aspects of community are

Individual & corporate measures

Stage of life is a determinate e.g. family, aged, young

General health of community members, particularly for ageing members of the community

Affordability – especially affordable housing, housing diversity

De-centralisation of public housing

Close to school, work, recreation, housing options, amenities, open spaces/green spaces

Accessible public transport

Visual amenity & accessible natural environment

TOP 3:

Affordability e.g. housing, recreation, participation

Inter-relationship of determining factors

Preservation of natural environment & visual amenity (e.g. beaches, farming)

Economic rationale for liveability so it's ranked higher
 Reserving agricultural land
 Equity housing – housing design flexible and inclusive
 Using social networking for accessing services and groups
 Community centres for a variety of activities, especially to attract older people
 Connection and engagement through common areas
 Need to facilitate this connection to get people there
 Access to medical/health practitioners
 Ability to age in my home in my current community
 Embracing technology in ways that help liveability and make it affordable
 Sharing of resources and skills between people – collaborative community
 Ability to stay connected to family & friends of all ages
 Transport including footpaths that are continuous and go to the places I want to go
 Inclusive housing choice – not segregated and stigmatising

Social connectedness

Participation

Family

Access

- Transport
- Safety
- People with disabilities
- Comfort levels

A liveable community is inclusive

2. How are liveable communities currently being created in the Hunter? What opportunities exist to create liveable communities in the future?

The walkability of the area.

Placemaking

- Community determined what they need and where they actually need it. E.g. seat bench in the park

Connecting with neighbours

- Borrow or lend tools
- Street BBQs

Sharing things

- Cycle ways and footpaths
- Tools
- Push bikes
- Parks

Communities try to do more activities together

Geographic layout of the areas

- Natural features
- Climate

Learning from mistakes of the past

Greenfield – Masterplan

- Research control

Infill

- Council/developer/community consultation/existing community

Sustainable neighbourhood groups

Urban renewal e.g. Newcastle

- Honeysuckle
- Throsby Creek
- Lake Macquarie Foreshore

Should be happening:

Holistic approach to planning – put liveability at the forefront of planning
 Integrated planning across the 11 Hunter LGA's
 Community consultation up front
 Consistent approach to planning and land use
 Health/planning to work together and engage local government, transport, etc., e.g. location of hospitals without access to transport

Creation:

Engaging private sector e.g. use Landcom approach/principles
 Fernleigh Track, Murray's Beach, Speers Point – activity
 Decisions for land use – additional recreation activities
 Sharing of space e.g. Glendale multipurpose
 Social cohesion
 Involvement of all parties

- Councils
- Whole of government
- Partnerships

Opportunities:

Review and input into strategies – Lower & Upper Hunter
 Look at overall need
 Connectivity/grid pattern

3. What partnerships currently support liveable communities in the Hunter? What opportunities are there to build future partnerships?

- Developers & Architects that design communities
- With communities
- Industry
- Between 3 tiers of government, providing opportunities to develop with certainty

LGAs

HNE Health (Liveable Communities Project)
 Hunter Regional Organisation of Councils
 Regional sporting networks
 National sports teams e.g. Jets
 Cultural facilities e.g. art galleries
 Crime prevention partnership
 State Government – Regional Managers Network (through Premier's Dept)
 We need links between business developers and planning authorities

Good consultation with local communities

Contractual obligations to contribute to development (e.g. Wyong matching/funding initiatives)
 Local Government, State or Federal matching funding for developments
 Partnerships need to exist within levels of Government & Business to achieve outcomes

Partnerships – needs facilitation

Local government, health, housing, Aboriginal communities
 Neighbourhood groups, social groups – service clubs; mutual benefit – informed
 Catalogue the number of groups as a means of capturing likely partnerships
 Good ideas from unincorporated groups – get funding by partnering with incorporated groups
 Linking with other movements

- Environment, health, cycling
- Sustainability – rethinking

Minimise activity fragmentation (network)

Opportunities:

Facilitation Is important

- Cleaning house of information needed
- Community development worker role (central point)

Regional Managers Network

Hunter Councils

Social Planners Network

Community based inter-agencies

Hunter ACON Branch

LAC meetings

Partnerships with schools –grassroots partnerships

4. What inhibits the creation of liveable communities in the Hunter?

Blockages

Density vs. Market demand

- Broader social issues around density

Affordability of infrastructure

Connections (planning) between the three tiers of government

Flexibility to rezone as communities change

Infrastructure – adequate enough?

Commercial reality? to invest – private investments

Topography – try to build in difficult locations

Lag of infrastructure

Poor traffic planning and directions

- Pedestrian crossings
- Right turns
- E.g. bypass

Access to health services

Cost

Absence of public transport/traffic congestion

Major economic development that changes landscape of villages e.g. Coles, Woolworths arrival

- Small business loss of community

Absence of walking and cycling infrastructure

Cross boundary issues

Government departments working in silos and not competent

Decline of retail sector

- Online shopping, etc.
- Local shops closing

Developer interests

Market forces – changes

- Ageing
- New home grants

Population mass

Land availability

Economic climate

- Employment opportunities
- Mixed land use

DCP > LEP > Section 94 – not conducive to liveable communities

Leadership at all levels

Lack of resources – agencies are aware of what is required e.g. footpaths

Litigation e.g. resources used to repair footpaths to avoid litigation from falls, etc.

Constraints on local government re: raising of revenue e.g. rate pegging

Silo mentality – requirement for holistic planning within agencies

<p>Collaboration of agencies – need to work more closely together</p> <p>Lack of support services for mentally ill – lack of mental health services</p>
<p>Legislation</p> <p>Resources</p> <p>Conflicts between councils (State/Local)</p> <p>Red Tape</p> <p>Capped S94 costs</p> <p>Maintenance</p>
<p>Lack of resources/funds or the costs to create liveable built environments (i.e. what is budgeted and planned)</p> <p>Suitable land for development or allocation</p> <p>Imbalance in the reasons for development (e.g. profit vs liveable environment)</p> <p>Turnover of staff means the loss of partnerships developed</p> <p>Lack of dedicated staff resource, and whose role it is to develop and maintain relationships</p>
<p>Mining resources, checks & balances</p> <p>Lack of transport</p> <p>Lack of appropriately designed & located housing</p> <p>Skill base and understanding in construction industry</p> <p>Political will for long term decisions</p> <p>Housing – affordability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing to fit people, not people having to fit what's available
<p>Loss of ability to small talk, especially younger people</p> <p>Socially isolated groups within communities often don't get information or realise events, etc. are also for them</p> <p>Are regulations/behaviours - we are encouraging increased social isolation, e.g. sharing of food</p> <p>Literacy levels – functional literacy e.g. Centrelink, Medicare, educational levels restrict employment opportunities/financial</p> <p>Lack of understanding – some people are more visual e.g. Aboriginal people</p> <p>For Aboriginal families sometimes shame factor, many communities very tight/people try to protect each other</p> <p>Young children not attending school – role of parents, community expectations</p> <p>Risk of adverse environments: liability</p> <p>Expectations e.g. police saying walking to shops schools unsafe – role of parents?</p> <p>Physical isolation of some communities e.g. Karuah</p> <p>Transport infrastructure</p> <p>Funding/accountability requirements</p> <p>Silo mentality</p> <p>Data collection</p>

5. Who (stakeholders) and/or what issues are potential allies in creating liveable communities? Consider how professionals from very different backgrounds might work together. Are there examples of where this is happening already?

- 2036 Plan
- Integrated planning
 - Community collaboration (robust, active involvement between agencies) assisting in design
 - Asset based community development partners

Local councils and state government agencies working together

Sporting communities

<p>Forums like today</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Held periodically and follow up <p>Health organisations working with local government for health e.g. multi-organisation committees at local level</p> <p>We know what is needed/what to do – why isn't it happening?</p> <p>Review of Environment Planning and Assessment Act (State Govt)</p>
<p>Government empowering communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport • Health • Environmental sustainability movement • Education
<p>Potential Allies:</p> <p>Community needs to be on board</p> <p>Integrate the argument to get the best decisions</p> <p>Have developers at the table</p> <p>Professionals work together:</p> <p>The Regional Managers Network & GMAC, Hunter Councils</p> <p>Example: Arvia Apartments – to make it work 2 floors of affordable housing – integrated city – out of 7 floors</p>
<p>Potential Allies:</p> <p>Local & State Government</p> <p>Community</p> <p>NGO's</p> <p>Efficiency</p> <p>Professionals work together:</p> <p>Planning – all parties around the table</p> <p>Place based management</p> <p>Consultation with the community</p> <p>Reference group that takes responsibility/ownership</p> <p>Example: NSW Housing</p>
<p>Community matching funding initiatives (e.g. Wyong Shire Council)</p> <p>Physical activity is an issue that has created innovation & partnership (e.g. local government providing community access to fitness classes)</p> <p>Local government & schools partnering to provide access to students to green spaces</p> <p>Local government consulting with those who are being targeted by initiatives (e.g. young people, seniors, businesses)</p> <p>Tapping into mutual obligation programs to improve built environment (e.g. building/repair of local footpaths)</p> <p>Initiatives & partnerships to be applicable to the opportunities that exist in the area</p> <p>Community priorities need to be formed through broad consultation & agreement</p> <p>Resolve allocation made on the basis of agreed priorities</p> <p>Relationship/partnership of stakeholders (e.g. levels of government, developers, business)</p> <p>Get it right from the start, rather than playing catch up</p> <p>Ensure implementation of evidence-based approach to planning & development</p> <p>Enforcement/monitoring of minimum standards/ benchmarks</p> <p>Development proposals need to consider the social fabric/community connectedness within affordability</p> <p>Consultation with local communities for specific locations</p>
<p>Stakeholders:</p> <p>Everyone!</p> <p>Allies:</p> <p>Chamber of Commerce</p> <p>Local Government</p>

Working together:

How to do this?

Understanding there are different ways of looking at issues and accept this and work with it.

It is difficult but patience needed.

Reporting to joint project rather than own agency. Leaving own drivers at the door to work on the problem. Not about defending the territory.

Examples in private business and academia.

Issues driven

Networks

“Shovel-ready” projects

Funding/fund raising

Importance of info-sharing

Social impact assessments/must be rigorous and meaningful