

ADDENDUM

11.3.1 FINAL STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY CAPACITY POLICY AND PLAN 2020-25

LOCATION/ADDRESS	N/A
APPLICANT/LANDOWNER	Shire of Augusta Margaret River
FILE REFERENCE	CSV/169
REPORT AUTHOR	Jason Cleary, Community Planning and Development
AUTHORISING OFFICER	James Shepherd, Director Corporate and Community Services

This addendum provides an updated report.

REASON

The report has been updated to include detail about the submission received during the public consultation period and how the feedback was integrated into the final plan. Minor administration amendments were also made to improve the flow for readability without changing the intent of the final report.

IN BRIEF

- Shire officers have drafted a new policy and plan focused on asset-based capacity building by working with community leaders and volunteers across community groups, not-for-profits and social enterprises
- This approach aims to draw on community knowledge, energy and networks to deliver improved community resilience and response throughout the community and seeks to replace the Shire's *CCSP18 Safer Communities Policy*
- The purpose of the policy and plan is to provide clear direction for the Shire's Community Planning and Development team as well as other Shire service areas that work closely with community groups
- The plan is intended to best respond to what community leaders need, maximise the use of available resources and reach of a largely diverse and active community
- The plan was put out for final community consultation following Council endorsement of the final drafts at the Council Meeting held on 22 July 2020 (OM2020/142)
- One minor change has been made to the plan following community feedback.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorses the Final Strengthening Community Capacity Policy and Plan (as shown in Attachments 1 and 2) for implementation.

BACKGROUND

The Augusta Margaret River community and the local government sector is changing. Sustaining a resilient community is a priority for our shire and doing so in partnership with community and all levels of government is required in order to achieve sustainable and meaningful results. The traditional approach for local government in the area of community capacity building focused on areas of Community Safety; Injury and Crime prevention, however the focus for local governments has now shifted to enabling communities to be healthy and resilient.

Two report projects from 2018-19 have been important inputs into this work, including:

1. Mental Health and Wellbeing in the Shire of Augusta Margaret River. This report was developed by the Centre for Remote and Regional Mental Health at the University of Newcastle and commissioned and facilitated by the Lishman Health Foundation. Research was conducted from November 2018 to May 2019. Researchers visited the shire twice during this period whilst Shire officers delivered hands on support for the community engagement; these activities informed the report alongside detailed analysis of regional health data. The final report was delivered in June 2019 with findings showing a greater socio-economic divide in our community than commonly acknowledged. Health data also showed increasing mental health diagnosis, self-harm presentation at local hospitals, domestic violence and drug and alcohol issues.
2. Service Mapping for the AMR Shire, by the Western Australia Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA) and GP Down South. This was done in close partnership with the Shire and shire staff, with the GP Down South officer located in the community development team throughout the twelve month period and assisting with recovery efforts following the Osmington tragedy in 2018. This project report was delivered in August 2019 and identified various gaps in community and social services which would support community wellbeing. It also provided recommendations for integration and increased access to services, a focus on working with agencies to assist in promotion, upskilling and communication with GPs, a cross sectional approach to support a sustainable economy, innovation/entrepreneurialism and the development of social enterprises and affordable housing.

CONSULTATION AND ADVICE

EXTERNAL CONSULTATION

Community engagement was then conducted from November through to January 2020 to aid in the development of this plan. This work included:

- Community Leaders Forum held in November 2019, with approximately 50 attendees
- Review of all data and feedback received from previous local wellbeing reports, including the extensive community engagement received through 2018-19 and 2019-18 with Shire officers being involved in this work
- Analysis of vulnerable community's data from social atlas and census data
- Review of existing community development activities within the Shire and determination of priority areas for action
- Working with Shire staff to ensure integration, particularly with community engagement received through the Shire's Public Health Plan and Sustainable Economy Strategy
- Partnering with the Mental Health Commission and Mindful Margaret River to develop a community action plan which reaches shared objectives.

Community engagement during the response and recovery to significant events such as the Bushfires in 2011, the Osmington tragedy in 2018 and COVID-19 in 2020. Key feedback received during these times have greatly contributed to the development of this plan.

One response was received during the final round of consultation from LuckyK. This response was incorporated into changes at 3.4.3 – Sustainable Economies and Livelihoods. The original action was:

- Work with the local chambers and progress associations to enable greater feedback and input into social, environmental and economic projects within each townsite.

Changed to the following:

- Work with the local chambers and progress associations to enable greater feedback and input into social, environmental and economic projects within each townsite and understand gaps in services across the Shire.

As the Shire can only advocate for the need for services such as childcare it is important we are able to understand gaps in such services and what our role may be in trying to enable opportunities for these services to be developed and/or expanded.

No further changes were required for the Policy document.

INTERNAL CONSULTATION

These documents have been developed in close consultation with Sustainable Development including Sustainable Economy and Environmental Health with their respective strategic documents. The Shire Executive have also provided review.

DISCUSSION / OFFICER COMMENTS

There is no neat, linear approach to community development. The process required to support a welcoming, connected and resilient community needs to occur in partnership with and utilise the knowledge, skills and wisdom of the community. The guiding principles of the policy bring to life the values and approaches that the team have been employing over recent years and which best support an asset and place-based approach for meaningful working relationship with community.

The key objective of the Shire's Strengthening Community Capacity Plan 2020-24 is to strengthen the capacity, and in turn the resilience, of the Augusta Margaret River community, specifically with volunteers and community groups. The purpose of this work is to facilitate community action, where volunteers can be supported and empowered to achieve their aspirations and address identified community needs particularly those aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The principles of this plan seek to support healthy people and places through:

- Valuing the strengths of others
- Partnering with community members and groups to achieve shared vision and goals
- Acknowledging integration of community capital including physical, natural environment, economic, social and human assets
- Supporting the development of a fair and just community where no one is left behind, and
- Supporting community groups to be sustainable in order to mitigate, adapt and protect all members of our community to withstand climate events.

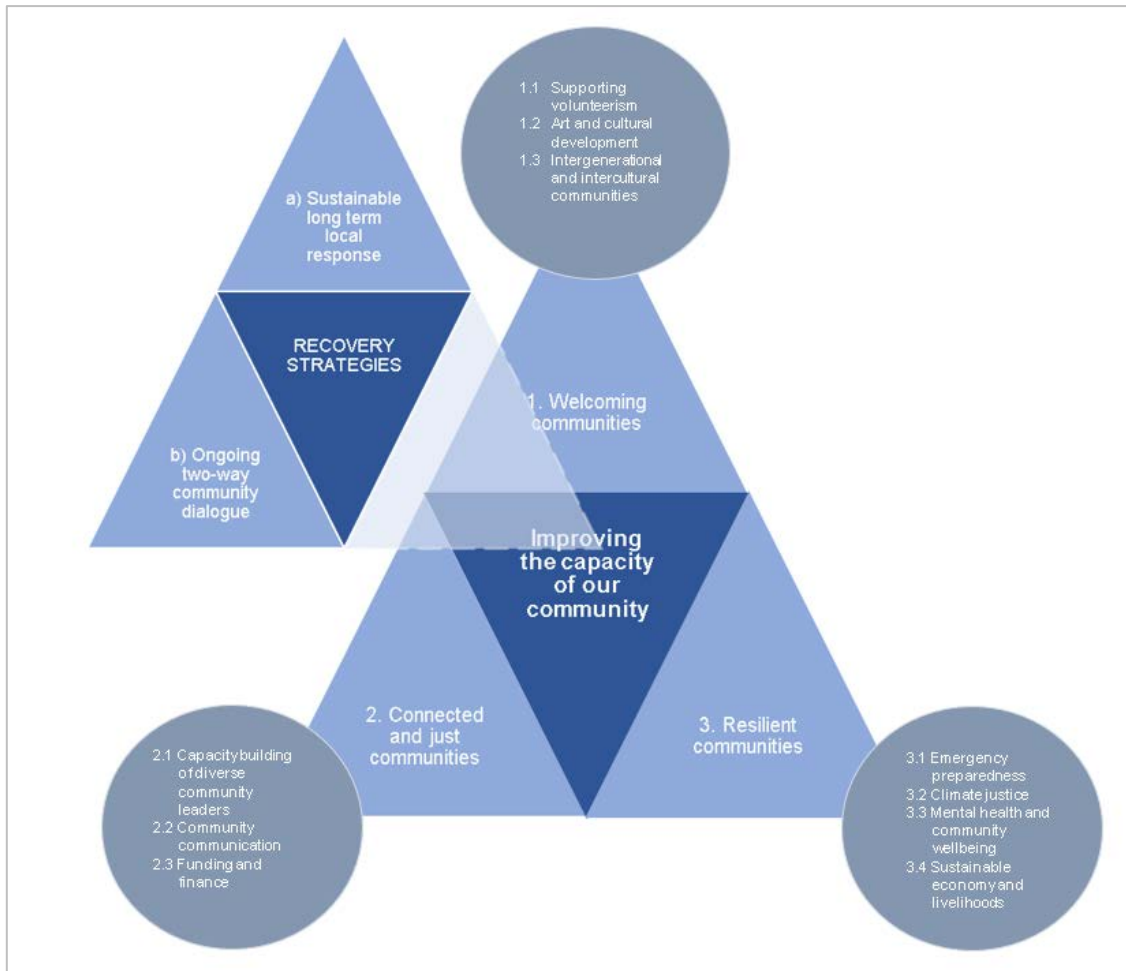
The principles apply to three broad levels of activity:

- Individual: community members including families, extended families and small groups
- Organisations: community based organisations including both informal and incorporated groups, community-controlled organisations, non-government organisations, and
- Broad system: local government and other state bodies operating at a local level.

The plan has been developed through examination of various research pieces; both from within and outside of the shire community. The analysis includes review of industry best practice from government and non-government agencies, as well as thorough community engagement conducted during 2019-20. Findings from this analysis has identified three key goal areas to support the creation of a strong, connected and resilient community which is able to respond to crisis and local recovery efforts:

1. **Welcoming communities:** Welcoming Communities recognise that communities are healthier, happier and more productive when newcomers and community members are welcomed and participate fully in society and in the local economy.
2. **Connected and just communities:** Connected and just communities operate fairly and are beneficial for individuals, families as well as the whole community. Community members, volunteers and community group leaders know their communities best and have a huge opportunity to effect systematic change particularly in social justice.
3. **Resilient communities:** Resilient communities are able to respond to incidents, have the ability to cope effectively with crises, learn from adversity and respond to climate justice. This brings together health and human services agencies, our business sector, non-government and government agencies.

This plan also delivers a template for local recovery action in the case of a local emergency, with two key strategies to guide community response. This could be presented as a local recovery plan, bespoke for any climate related or social impact event, as shown below:

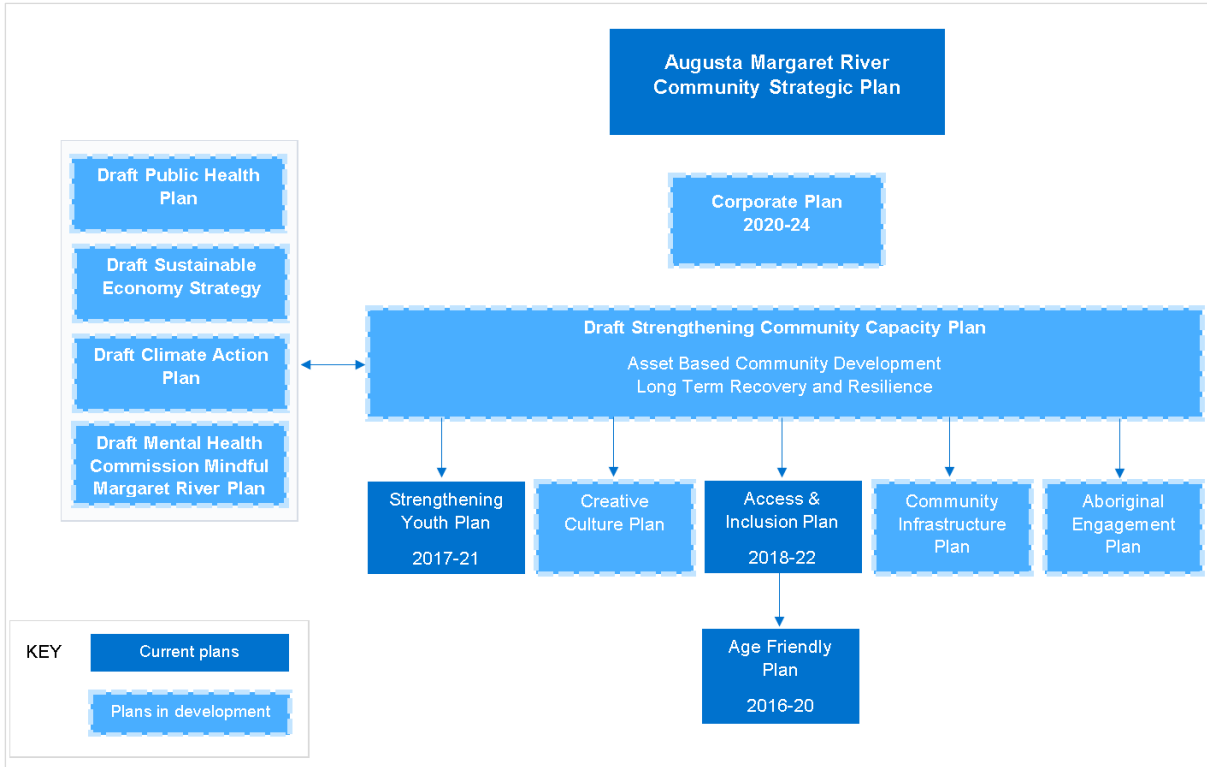


In recent years the Shire has been in recovery and response phase multiple times; this is anticipated to continue due to factors such as climate change and other social dynamics. It is acknowledged that planning and facilitating the community response and recovery in recent years has used significant staff resources within Shire community development team; with recovery actions taking priority this has delayed the implementation of regular programs and activities. Responding to incidents may therefore require additional resources in order to best respond and this should be planned for accordingly.

The Shire's overall response is focused on the support for non-profit and community groups, particularly across the following areas:

- Community activation
- Volunteering
- Funding and finance
- Research and evaluation, and
- Advocacy.

Using the fundamental principles of an Asset Based Community Development approach to plan and develop services this plan supports sustainable initiatives, integrated services, programs and projects which contribute to a connected, inclusive and resilient Augusta Margaret River community. Integration with other Shire and community development plans and key documents is provided below.



STATUTORY ENVIRONMENT / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The *Local Government Act 1995* specifies the key roles of the Council. Under Section 2.7 of the *Local Government Act 1995*, Council has four main roles:

1. Direct and control the Local Government's affairs;
2. Be responsible for the local government's functions;
3. Oversee the allocation of the local government's finances and resource; and
4. Determine the local government's policies.

Policy determination is a key role of the Council. Policies are guidelines to provide a consistent approach and framework for Council decision making and for the CEO and staff to action Council's requests. Policies are not legislation and there may be circumstances where a position needs to be taken which is at variance with an existing policy. In these circumstances, Council should make a decision that departs from an existing policy.

STRATEGIC PLAN / POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Community Strategic Plan 2036 (CSP)

Corporate Business Plan 2020-2024

Key Result Area 2: Welcoming, inclusive and healthy communities

Community Outcome 1: Evolving cultural values are respected and adopted

Strategy 2: Support local art and community celebrations, events and local festivals which develop unique creative capital

2.1.2.1 – Implement the Creative Blueprint including the Spare Plinth Program and Public Art Policy, and review every four years.

PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Nil

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Approximately \$100,000 is allocated in the 2020-21 annual budget for community capacity related grants and specific activities.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Environmental

This policy and plan has been developed to support and compliment environmental community group activities and Shire environmental programs like the Environmental Management Fund.

Social

This policy and plan follows a triple bottom line approach and is intended to directly support social, environmental and economic community outcomes through community groups and volunteers, and in collaboration with other Shire service areas.

Economic

This policy and plan has been developed to support and compliment the Shire's draft Sustainable Economy Strategy.

VOTING REQUIREMENTS

Simple Majority

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorses the Final Strengthening Community Capacity Policy and Plan (as shown in Attachments 1 and 2) for implementation.

ADVICE TO APPLICANT / PROPONENT

Nil