

THE SHIRE COMMUNITY

Introduction

Johnstone Shire comprises a diverse multicultural community. The Council is committed to providing and ensuring a support network for community issues, and to enhancing the environment for recreation.

News

Major news for 2002 was the completion of the Community Needs Analysis by the Community Support Centre.

The Analysis details the levels of community services available in the Johnstone Shire. The analysis identifies the requirements for additional activity and services to promote a healthier community. At present most community services are over-stretched. This includes problems with the following:

- A lack of community awareness of the services
- Disability service provision
- A lack of counsellors available
- Funding and programs for the aged
- A need for increased indigenous focus
- A lack of crisis accommodation and emergency relief
- More medium and long term housing needed
- A lack of day care and parenting support
- Legal advice
- Support, facilities and unstructured activities for youth
- Training programs

A Legislative reclassification, which broadened the definition of Domestic Violence, has led to an increased need for support service provision. Domestic violence has also increased during recent economic hardship.

A Community Relations Plan is currently underway. Council members now attend multicultural training sessions to ensure that Council services are rendered appropriately in the multicultural context of the community.

Funds were granted in response to an application

to improve low cost housing for aged pensioners. Two existing units will now be upgraded. In total there are 31 low cost housing spaces for the aged, but this does not meet the demand.

A youth forum was held in 2002 to provide feedback to the State government's 'Smart State' initiative to provide alternatives in education.

State Schools in the Johnstone Shire have formed a Curriculum Alliance to cooperatively plan curricular programs for year 6 and 7 students to assist with student transition into year 8.

The Innisfail Inclusive Education Centre (formerly the Innisfail Special School) now provides an additional program, which is a special education development unit (SEDU) program for younger students with disabilities.

The Innisfail Learning Development Centre, based at the Innisfail Inclusive Education Centre, continues to assist schools in the development of individual school based literacy programs that target the needs of all students.

The Daradgee Environmental Education Centre continued to offer alternate education to increase young people's awareness, and also appreciation of the environment. 1384 students visited the Education Queensland facility on day or overnight trips.

Innisfail TAFE is now offering a Conservation and Land Management Training Package as part of the horticulture course. The course will raise the level of qualification achievable for horticulture, which in the past has been relegated to Townsville and Mareeba TAFEs where courses particularly dealing with rainforest planting have not been provided.

The facility established at the TAFE works in conjunction with QWPS and aims to become a regional centre for rainforest work and research.

A focus on bush tucker plants has also been included, as part of future development for this up and coming industry.

TAFE also works with the vocational partnerships program for students in high school to undertake alternative education through training.

The provision of medical services in the Shire has improved in some areas, including visits by extra surgeons. The provision of Mental Health Services has increased with extra staff employed to help adults, youth and children. A mental health promotion project is currently running to enhance community connectedness.

The Shire still lacks an ear, nose and throat specialist, as well as an orthopaedic specialist. The services of the local paediatric specialist ended.

A proposed health and community care transport system did not eventuate. Persons requiring this support presently rely on the goodwill of friends and family for transport. Funding was applied for to create a service for people requiring medical care, or for involvement in activities.

The respite bus has too few seats for the people requiring transport.

TransNorth provided an additional public bus service route in 2002 - to Cowley Beach.

Indicators

Statistics for the Community, Johnstone Shire – from the ABS census 2001.

The Population of Johnstone Shire, as of June 2001, was 19,511 people.

Median age – 36.8 (Qld average 35.0)

Multiculturalism (people with background from one or more geographical areas):

Oceania	8072
NW European	10266
S and E European	3567
N Africa and Middle East	10
Sub-Saharan Africa	27
SE Asia	590
NE Asia	275
S and Central Asia	217
Americas	70
Indigenous Heritage	1644
Born Overseas	2505

Religious Belief:

Buddhism	194
Christianity	14592
Hinduism	13
Islam	21
Judaism	8
Other	329
No religion	2533
Not stated	1543



Highest Level of Schooling completed:

Year 10 or below	Year 11 to 12	Never Attended
8234	5024	220

Attending school in 2001 — 3617 students.

Attending 2002 —

State Schools

Primary – 1844 students

Secondary – 747

Private Schools

Primary – 557 students

Secondary – 537

Tertiary education

678 students were enrolled at the Innisfail TAFE.

The TAFE institute offers courses in areas including: English, Vocational Access, Workplace Practice, Visual Arts, Business, Community Services, Justice, Indigenous Legal Studies, Information Technology, Clothing Production, Extractive Industries, Horticulture, Aquaculture, Hospitality and Tourism.

Against the Person	242
Property	735
Public Order	321
Breach DV Order	52
Drugs	307
Drink Driving	242
Motor Vehicle	47

Offences reported 2002 From Police divisions within the Johnstone Shire

Unemployment in the Shire, at November 2002, was 4% claiming Newstart or Youth allowance at the Innisfail Centrelink.

Report Card for the Shire Community

Criteria	Grade	Recommendation Group	Explanation
Action on recommendations 11 of 14 recommendations actioned to date	B-	- Community Services - Education - Health	-More staff, programs and funding are required. -Some programs are underway. -Mental Health service has increased. -In general, only some progress has occurred
Filling deficiencies in data	A+	- All	-The Community Needs Analysis provides a detailed analysis of service provision and further requirements. -2001 census data is now available.
State of the Shire	D+	- Community - Community Services - Health - Recreation	- Social hardship has worsened due to economic difficulty for the Shire. - Service provision has only increased slightly. - More specialist care access is still required. - More unstructured recreational facilities are required by Youth .
Goal Achievement	B-	- All	- Low levels of goal achievement occurred in 2002. Most effort was expended in coping with current community needs.
Community Awareness	C+	-Community services - Community - Health	- General awareness of the community services available is low in the Shire. - Some optimism for the future. - Mental health being actively promoted.

OVERALL GRADE B-

Conclusion

Due to increased hardship because of difficult economic times, the care services in place require additional help. In general, there is a large need for more programs and workers to service community.

Future Direction

With the Community Needs Analysis as a basis it should be possible to plan future directions for the provision of Community Services.



Alan Maruff House,
Staff, and the
Respite Bus