

Chapter 7

Social Impact Management Plan



NOONAMAH
RIDGE

INTRAPAC

7 SOCIAL IMPACT MANAGEMENT PLAN

7.1 MANAGEMENT

Legislation, standards and guidelines

The NT Government does not currently prescribe legislative standards for the provision of social infrastructure, or the management/mitigation of social infrastructure. The following guidelines and standards have been referenced in the preparation of this plan, in some cases national / interstate guidelines where these are considered best practice:

- *NT EPA Guidelines For The Preparation Of An Economic And Social Impact Assessment (2013)*
- *Growth Centres Commission (2006), Growth Centres Development Code, New South Wales*
- *MacroPlanDimasi, Greater Darwin Regional Land Use Plan Update 2013 Vols 1, 2, 3*
- *Northern Territory Government, Framing the Future 2014*
- *Northern Territory Government, Darwin Regional Land Use Plan 2014*
- *Queensland Government, Office of Urban Management 2007, South East Queensland Regional Plan 2005–2026, Implementation Guideline No. 5, Social infrastructure planning*
- *Parks and Leisure Australia (2012), Benchmarks for Community Infrastructure: A PLA WA Working Document*
- *Vic Health 2005, Social Inclusion as a determinant of mental health and wellbeing: Research Summary 2, Mental Health and Wellbeing Unit, Carlton.*
- *Victorian Government Growth Areas Authority, Planning for Community Infrastructure in Growth Areas 2008*
- *Victorian Government Growth Areas Authority Guide to Social Infrastructure Planning 2009*

Existing environment

A demographic profile based on data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) *2011 Census of Population and Housing* is summarised in Table 4-1. There are differences between the region and the Municipality of Litchfield, but none that would alter service delivery.

There is little in the way of social infrastructure in the immediate vicinity of Noonamah Ridge, but there are many local-level facilities in the various rural communities near the site – specifically Humpty Doo, Bees Creek, Coolalinga and Howard Springs. These can be relatively easily accessed by vehicle. In addition, there are a large number of local, district and regional level facilities and services on offer within Palmerston and surrounding areas, which are within approximately 20 km (a 20-minute drive) of the site. There are also many natural areas for recreational activities within a similar distance.

The range of existing facilities and services is appropriate for the current population and could accommodate some growth over time. However, given the significant increase in local population expected at Noonamah Ridge, there will be a need for new local- and district-level community facilities and services to meet the needs of this new population. Some will be provided within the Noonamah Ridge development – see Section 2.3.1 for detail – while others will be accommodated within existing facilities in the region.

There is no intention for Noonamah Ridge to be restricted to high-income earners or developed as a ‘gated community’. Rather, the range of lot sizes will encourage a diversity of residents and households from across life cycle stages to locate within the site, and many would be expected to be attracted from other nearby communities.

Potential impacts

A number of potential social issues associated with the development were raised during the community consultation process described in Section 1.7.2:

- Decreased social amenity
- Social isolation
- Increased crime
- Inadequate social infrastructure and services.

These are all possible consequences of developing a greenfield site and thereby creating an increased density of blocks and increase in local population.

Additional potential impacts are:

- Decreased amenity due to increased noise (in the construction phase) and light (in the occupancy phase)
- Decreased road safety and amenity due to increased traffic (in both the construction and occupancy phases).

7.1.1 Design and planning

Retaining character

Development of a greenfield site creates an increased density of blocks and increase in local population. During community consultation, some residents have expressed concerns about potential changes to the existing character of the area leading to reduced amenity. Mindful of these concerns, Intrapac is committed to providing a high quality, master-planned, rural character estate with a range of lot sizes and an emphasis on rural living options. To facilitate this at the design and planning phase, Intrapac will:

- Undertake community consultation from project conception to identify existing residents' concerns and needs, and to incorporate concerns and ideas into the master plan.
- Deliver social infrastructure that meets the needs of the existing population, as well as the new population.
- Commit to the minimum lot size being 800 m².
- Introduce into the *NT Planning Scheme* a relevant controlling clause to ensure that, once developed, no further subdivision of individual properties will be permitted.
- Ensure with the Area Plan that lot sizes along Redcliffe Road and to the northern boundary are complementary to existing lots/homes, creating an interface with existing adjacent landholdings.
- Provide within subdivisions setbacks in accordance with the requirements of the *NT Planning Scheme* and endorse these through the application of building envelopes.
- Develop and incorporate high-level architectural design guidelines into each sale agreement.
- Place a covenant on the title of each property requiring an assessment of building plans against the guidelines, and approval before construction can commence.
- Ensure within the Area Plan that the proportion of public green space within the project area is no less than 15 %.

Avoiding social isolation

The potential for isolation due to large distances from established communities can be minimised by building a strong and well-integrated local community through the creation of physical connections (roads, pathways, public transport and community facilities) at the design and planning stage, and then fostering social connections (community development worker, community activities, place-making and social cohesion) at the occupancy stage to.

Building social cohesion is a fundamental principle in the social sustainability framework of *Litchfield Council's Strategic Plan 2013 – 2016*. Risks of social isolation and exclusion are typically managed through careful master plan design that focuses on:

- Promoting connectivity, permeability and physical integration of the site
- Design elements that encourage safety and security for residents
- Provision of high quality sporting and recreational facilities
- Positioning of the rural activity centres.

Good quality and affordable transport connections are essential to overcome the potential for social isolation. The concept master plan incorporates a network of local roads, open spaces and pathways that will physically integrate all parts of the development, creating a self-contained community. This will ensure the local pedestrian and cyclist network can facilitate safe movement and provide attractive environments that link through each residential precinct. These linkages will assist in providing connections and opportunities for social integration. In time, there will be an extension of existing public transport services into this new community (see Section 2.4.4). In the interim, a shuttle bus service between Palmerston and Noonamah could meet community needs for connections to overcome the potential for isolation.

Social isolation can also develop if there are insufficient opportunities for people to meet friends and neighbours, and to develop support networks. This risk can also be minimised by creating opportunities for social interaction and by developing social networks through the design of public spaces and community facilities, and through the provision of community facilities in which activities and programs can be held.

Many new residents develop social networks over time through their involvement in local schools, sports and clubs, and through their local contacts and experiences in the area. However, casual/incidental contacts will also be facilitated through the design of open spaces and shopping areas. A community facility will be provided which will run activities and programs (e.g. classes, courses, exercise programs and educational sessions) and host community events, encouraging people to meet others with similar interests or skills.

Other design strategies for avoiding social isolation and/or physical isolation from community services and facilities will be to:

- Ensure public transport is available from Stage 1.
- Ensure roads associated with Stage 1 are constructed and completed prior to occupation.
- Deliver social infrastructure such as a school and day-care within Stage 1, or as required, to support both existing needs and needs arising from the proposed development.

Planning for crime prevention

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles (see, e.g., Queensland Government 2007) will be incorporated into the design of each stage of the development. These include:

- Natural surveillance
 - Creating open space within which anti-social behaviour is not hidden
 - Avoiding blind corners in pathways
 - Creating direct pathways
 - Using appropriate landscaping and lighting
- Access control

- Using walkways to guide people and vehicles
- Employing appropriate building entry points, lighting, signage and landscaping
- Territorial reinforcement
 - Ensuring clear distinction between public and private spaces

Noise and light intrusion

Ongoing light intrusion will be managed through the adoption of rural road standards that do not include street lighting, and through considering alternate street lighting – including low-level lighting and motion sensor-activated lighting in the more built-up parts of the development (see Section 2.6).

Provision of new community services and facilities

A forecast of population of around 11,000 people would provide a catchment of sufficient size to support a small number of local-level facilities. The proposed rezoning and concept master plan allow social infrastructure to be provided to meet the community needs. In the design and planning phase, the focus will be on facilities that will have land requirements within the proposed residential zones, to ensure that sufficient land is identified in appropriate locations to meet future need. This focuses particularly on facilities and services provided by local government and Territory agencies (such as schools). Sites for facilities provided by the non-government and private sectors can often be accommodated in residential or commercial zonings, and do not need to be specially identified at the rezoning stage. They are usually acquired through the private market and will need to be considered at a later stage of development as demand is established. Types of private/non-government facilities that may have land requirements include private schools, private health care services, churches, childcare services, commercial gym and fitness facilities, residential aged care facilities, and entertainment facilities such as cinemas, hotels and restaurants. The concept master plan allows sufficient scope and flexibility to accommodate such uses, should demands emerge.

At Noonamah Ridge, the proposed villages will provide opportunities for the provision of social infrastructure such as community or recreational facilities, activities and lifestyle opportunities that will be linked to and integrated with the residential components. Social infrastructure proposed for the development is described in Section 2.3.1 and addresses all the forecast requirements for the development, as well as relevant social infrastructure benchmarks.

Community needs for higher order services and facilities will be met by accessing those available in nearby urban centres, such as Palmerston and Darwin. The ways in which the future population of Noonamah Ridge could best contribute towards the costs of these higher order facilities would be a matter for further discussions with Litchfield Council during the next stages of planning.

7.1.2 Construction

The management of noise from construction is addressed in Section 6.12.2 of this EMP. Likewise, traffic management as it relates to construction is addressed in Section 6.5.2 of this EMP. The stakeholder engagement strategy discussed in Section 7.2 outlines the approach in terms of notifying stakeholders of construction activity that may impact on them, as well as the management of complaints.

7.1.3 Occupancy

Most impact management measures are incorporated in the design and planning, and the construction phases. Some ongoing management by Intrapac will be required during the occupancy phase, namely:

- Investigating the incorporation of a neighbourhood watch or some similar community organisation.
- Employing a community development worker in the early stages of settlement charged with introducing new residents to their neighbours and organising social events to encourage interactions and social cohesion.
- Liaising with NT Government and Litchfield Council to ensure the timely provision of social infrastructure and services the provision of which they are responsible.

7.2 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

To date Noonamah Ridge has employed a comprehensive stakeholder engagement strategy. The intent is to continue this, with the following key actions:

- Complying with statutory exhibition periods as part of the approval application process for each subdivision stage, as well as each land use requiring consent of the Development Consent Authority.
- Ongoing liaison with NT Government Departments in relation to the delivery, funding and timing of social infrastructure to meet the needs of the local community.
- Ongoing community newsletters and direct mail-outs outlining:
 - Current progress and opportunities for involvement/consultation.
 - Construction activities and notification of consequent disruptions to services, road closures, construction outside of normal construction hours and similar activities.
- Community information sessions and open days, providing information on such topics as upcoming construction works, proposed revisions to the master plan, next stages, as well as providing the and opportunity for public comment and feedback for incorporation into planning .
- Establishment of a local working group to advise on matters of social and community importance to input into detailed subdivision design.
- Ongoing provision of up-to-date information through the project website.
- Establishment of a communications protocol in relation to receiving, managing and responding to complaints in a timely fashion.

7.3 MONITORING

An ongoing monitoring plan will be put in place at the development application stage to monitor and assess social impacts and needs, and to reflect this in the provision of social infrastructure as well as social impact mitigation.

The purpose of the plan is to:

- Provide evidence of the outputs and outcomes of the Communications and Engagement Plan for accountability and reporting purposes. This could include a range of tools, such as random sampling to gauge understanding of the project at approval of each subdivision application.
- Ensure community engagement activities are as effective as possible.
- Ensure social needs are being met or exceeded.

- Adapt the plan where outcomes are not being achieved.
- Share and reflect experiences and learnings to help Intrapac understand how to better deliver good social outcomes and facilities.

The plan will include the monitoring for the occupancy stage discussed in Section 7.1.3.