

## LISMORE CITY PROFILE

### 2.0 LISMORE CITY TODAY - REGIONAL CENTRE IN A RURAL AREA.

The City of Lismore<sup>1</sup> has a population of about 38,530 or 12,500 households which is likely to increase to 50,000 by the year 2000. Whilst the population is increasing, the rate of growth is slowly declining and is currently 1.8%. At present 63% of the population lives in the urban area and it is likely that this geographic distribution will continue into the 21st century. Over the next twenty years, on current trends, population growth in the town area will occur in East Lismore and in the surrounding ridge suburbs with the population declining in North and South Lismore and in the Basin. Council planning, however, proposes to alter this trend.

By contrast with the State and Region, Lismore has larger Aboriginal and Australian-born populations, a higher proportion of children and disabled people, and more poverty with geographical pockets of, economically disadvantaged people. Unemployment, at 17.4%, is over twice the national rate but although occupational representation is typical of rural centres there is a higher proportion of people with formal and trade qualifications.

Lismore itself has played a strong role as the Regional centre of the Far North Coast, having the economic diversity and stability typical of other regional rural centres, and the Lismore/Goonellabah urban centre is the Region's largest urban centre.

The Central areas of Lismore, including its entire central business district, are flood prone. This has a range of indirect detrimental effects on the Council, the town and the community, including extra costs. A great deal of time and resources has been, and will be, spent trying to come to terms with this aspect of Lismore, notwithstanding that the established community copes with floods reasonably well.

The urban area of Lismore is relatively well-serviced by retailers with a range of shopping facilities both in the Central Business District and the neighbouring suburbs, and convenience stores in a number of locations. There is room, however, for further select retail development to meet the anticipated population growth. The Central shopping block has the unique feature of retailing right around it in almost equal quality shopping streets, with potential for attractive improvements. A major shortcoming is a shortage of adequate car parking and a somewhat dated presentation.

Rural industries in the area include dairying, beef production, macadamia and other tropical fruit growing, with some small cropping. The non-rural industries, apart from retail, which bring money into the district are largely related to Lismore's Regional centre role. They include the large Base Hospital, extensive Educational facilities including the University of New England Northern Rivers, State and Federal Government Regional offices, financial and professional regional services and a range of manufacturing and light industries, some of which export from the region. The Council has been, and is, active in the provision of developed industrial land. The service industry is by far the largest employing industry in the area with 38.5% of people employed in it, followed by wholesale/retail with 17.6% and the manufacturing and rural industries employing 7.7% each.

<sup>1</sup> Where "City" is used in this document it refers to the whole Local Government Area.

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The experience of relatively extensive rural multiple occupancy is one which makes Lismore different to most other rural areas in N.S.W. It has approximately 35 approved multiple occupancy communities of varying sizes totalling less than 5% of the population but more than 15% of the non-urban population. In some parishes the populations of these communities are a majority.

The fragmentation of rural land into non viable farms is another rural feature. There has been a number of consequences of both these rural features including greater rural road usage because of more rural commuters, greater rural populations with their needs and demands, and a range of consequent social conflicts, all requiring the attention of Council.

These extra demands come at a time when Council's capacity to raise money from traditional sources is limited by rate-pegging, and when Federal and State Governments expect Local Government to take on responsibility for the provision of more community services. Although the population increased by 22% and the number of rateable assessments by 24% between 1976 and 1988 the ratio of assessments to population has hardly changed (1:2.9 people in 1976 and 1:2.8 in 1988). The share of income from general rates has increased from 35.5% in 1977 to 38.5% in 1988.

The transport system across the City is inadequate to support either the needs of residents, the development of tourism or the maintenance of Lismore's Regional Centre role into the 21st century. Road construction and maintenance is an urgent and major priority across the City, with inadequate funding from other levels of Government and frequent flooding over the past three years seriously affecting Council's capacity to address this issue effectively. The possible reduction of rail services to Lismore, and the location of two jet airports at Casino and Ballina, whilst Lismore itself is restricted to a commuter level airport, are seen as potential threats which Council has to address.

Lismore has a strong focus on sport with Council providing 97 hectares of sportsfields in the urban area and five others located at Nimbin, The Channon, Bexhill, Dunoon and Tregeagle providing excellent facilities for a wide range of sports. Sports competitions and sporting events are an important contribution to the local economy attracting many visitors to the area. Apart from sportsgrounds, recreation facilities include the Library with an extended mobile service, an Art Gallery, a traditional museum, the Wilson's River Heritage Centre, parks, a cinema theatre, a number of local theatre groups with their own intimate theatres, health and fitness centres, ten pin bowling, skateboard facilities, bike tracks and a mini grand-prix.

As a regional centre Lismore has attracted a broad range of human services, both Government and community-based. These services cater to all population groups from children's services through to the aged and include preschools, long day care and occasional child care, supported accommodation services, Neighbourhood Centre, Meals-on-wheels, Home Care, and family support services specifically designed to meet the needs of the unemployed, aged and disabled. Whilst the range of human services is good, there are still gaps which need to be addressed.

Tourism in the area, apart from that attracted by sporting events, consists mainly of free, independent travellers, people visiting friends and relatives, business visitors and occasional conference/convention groups. This pattern hasn't changed significantly over the past ten years except for

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a small increase in group tours since late 1987. Potential growth areas for tourism include group tours for both general and specific interests and the conference/convention market when the existing problems of shortages in accommodation in Lismore are overcome.

The Lismore climate is included in the Australian "climatic comfort zone" with mild winters and fairly hot, although wet, summers. The area contains some of the nicest rural and plantation landscapes in the State with many streams and forests including rainforests. Big scrub and rainforest remnants close to, indeed right in the middle of, the urban area, are an unusual and attractive feature of Lismore. Easy access to the beautiful coastal beaches adds to the attraction of the area, as do the array of regular markets which operate in the area and the network of local Villages, each with its own character and appeal.

## 2.1 THE FUTURE OF LISMORE - CHALLENGES AND ISSUES FOR LISMORE CITY COUNCIL.

Key issues confronting Lismore in the future are;

- \* Lismore's demographic and economic share of the Far North Coast Region is declining and there is a need for concerted action to preserve its role as Regional Centre. The coastal shires of Ballina and Byron have population growth rates higher than Lismore and building construction (value of buildings approved) is now outstripping Lismore.<sup>2</sup>
- \* There is an urgent need for residential blocks and affordable housing in the City. Residential and rural strategies recently completed by the Planning Department concluded that approximately 1600 lots will be required over the next six years. There is limited serviced land available for residential development and Council needs to address the potential for different housing densities and greater flexibility in the use of some areas of land.
- \* *Hot* The road system is under great stress. Although 45% of roads in the area are sealed, most of Council's rural roads were constructed to a low standard and now are more than 30 years old, badly deformed, heavily pot-holed and in desperate need of reconstruction. Any funds that become available either from Council or other Government sources are likely to be used for reconstruction of the existing roads on the existing alignments using cement stabilisation. It is unlikely that Council will increase the overall length of its rural bitumen road network in the near future as Council has insufficient resources to do more than provide basic maintenance and limited reconstruction. The growing demand for better, and more, roads caused partly by the growth of the population in the rural areas and the incidence of regular flooding over the past few years are putting more stress on scarce resources. As an indicator of Council's commitment to roads, by comparison with the 834 Local

<sup>2</sup>North Coast Population and Development Monitor, Issue No.11, January 1990, p. 10-11.

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Government Areas in Australia Lismore City Council contributes \$135 per head of population of its own money to roads which ranks it 291. Roads grants received, however, amount to \$10 per head of population which ranks Lismore at 670.<sup>3</sup> Unusually heavy and consistent rain for the first half of the year over recent years has further impeded the works program. It will require strong and concerted action by Council to attract a more equitable share of Government funding for roads.

- \* Adequate air and rail services are seen as essential to maintain Lismore's position as the Regional Centre. The cost of airfares is also having a negative impact on travel to Lismore. Council is committed to ensuring that existing services are maintained and improved.
- \* Despite the range of human services which exist in Lismore, most services experience high demand which can't always be met. Major gaps exist in the youth area. There is a real need for services to be culturally appropriate to cater for our Aboriginal and ethnic populations, and to be flexible enough to provide a specialist service when required, such as aged care for dementia sufferers. The severe shortage of rental accommodation has flow-on effects for community-based services. A primary issue is the inability of town-based services to extend to outlying areas and the inevitable transport problems which impede access to those services. This situation is exacerbated by the expectation of State and Federal Governments that Local Govt take greater responsibility in these areas.
- \* To ensure the economic growth of Lismore there is a need to encourage the growth of new industry and the expansion of existing businesses. With high unemployment, a wide range of skills amongst our unemployed, and a record of stability industrially Lismore provides a good base for that growth. Because of its geographic location, the type of industry development which is seen as top priority is that which is vertically integrated with local production and manufactures, value-added, and supports existing local industry.
- \* Parking facilities in the Central Business District are inadequate now, and more so for the future, particularly in regard to short-term parking. Linked to this issue is that of malls and other civic developments to enhance the attraction of the area for residents and tourists and to provide safe, efficient passage in and through the city.
- \* The preservation of significant areas of both traditional and new era agricultural activities is perceived to be vital to the stability of the district's economy. Council is periodically subjected to considerable pressure to approve subdivisions (often for the benefit of retiree farmers) of prime agricultural land.
- \* The traditional museum and Art Gallery are housed in a substandard building acquired 40 years ago for demolition. There is a real need to rehouse both. In the case of the Art Gallery, which occupies the

<sup>3</sup> Australian Local Government Handbook, 1989. p. 350-351.

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flood-prone ground floor, the need is urgent as it is impossible to attract visiting exhibitions if a Gallery is in a flood-prone area. In addition the inadequacy of funding for libraries is placing an imposition on ratepayers and restricting the service which our Library can provide.

- \* Floods have a direct impact on all parts of the community and Council will need to continue to develop policies which protect the community and its assets. Whilst floods impact across the City, the affect of frequent floods on the Central Business District is severe and there is an urgent need to address this issue.
- \* In line with national, indeed global, pressures Council will need to address the issue of all forms of pollution and of environmental protection. In particular, the life of our current tip is about 15 years and any alternative form of garbage disposal needs to be planned for now.
- \* The use and control of hard drugs and its related crime is already impacting on Council and needs to be addressed.
- \* Current rate pegging severely restricts Council's revenue-raising capacity through rates, and the lack of sufficient funding from State and Federal Government financial support limits Council's capacity to cater adequately for the community's needs. Council's rate revenue per head of population is \$157, which ranks it 581 out of the 834 Local Government Areas in Australia. Untied grants to the Council per head of population are \$47 which ranks Lismore 564 out of 834, and contributes to the 15.38% debt payment/rate revenue which places it similarly at 564 out of 834.<sup>4</sup> In the past Council has borrowed heavily for road construction, maintenance and plant. Until its level of loan indebtedness is reduced it needs to restrain borrowing. It also needs to adopt an entrepreneurial approach to its own business and to ensure that scarce resources are allocated wisely for the maximum benefit of the community.

pg. mission statement.

"Working with the Community to maintain Lismore as the Regional Centre in a healthy Rural Setting".

Major principles during this mission are increased opportunity for community input into Council decision making

my municipalities want to provide  
about of the people by for!

<sup>4</sup> Australian Local Government Handbook, 1989, p. 252-253.

✓ 72107  
p. 12 <sup>5.1</sup> Key Council target for 1992

Use pay principle where relevant - try trucks

p13 <sup>5.2</sup> Community Facilities  
Social Plan completed.

" <sup>5.3</sup> Development  
Assessment & adoption of a rural landscape study

p15 <sup>5.7</sup> Ind. & tourism  
Attraction to dis. of major 5 star Hotel/Hotel  
with character buildings

" <sup>5.8</sup> Sports & Rec  
• Implement tree planting prog.  
• Tree trees for new houses.

What about stream bank prot.  
no car parking stream banks

" <sup>5.9</sup> Sewerage  
Sew. sys. which ensure a clean & healthy env.  
whilst remaining env. acceptable & meeting the  
needs of the community.  
try local autonomous sys.

p18 revise existing policy manual

p27. Library - initial on-line public access computer  
add SHC. Programs, regional mapping/retrieval etc  
BSE input

# DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT

## STRATEGIES FOR 1992 AND 1990 ACTION PLAN

**BUDGET ALLOCATION:** \$409,405 (1.6%)

**STAFF RESOURCES:** 8.23

**RESPONSIBLE PERSON:** Peter Reynders - Chief Planner

### PURPOSE

*Hotel*  
To consider the needs of both developers and the wider community by seeking common ground for both groups in assessing Development Applications.

**Strategy 1** Provide a professional advisory and information service to developers prior to the submission of a building application.

**Actions 1990** \* Provide advice without appointments between 8.30 and 10 a.m. each weekday.

\* Train clerical staff to provide accurate information

**Strategy 2** Ensure that the Development Assessment functions of Council are implemented effectively.

**Actions 1990** \* Site assessments to be carried out on all Development Applications and all developments to be assessed in line with the requirements of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act.

\* All Development Applications will be sighted by the Development Control Unit, which comprises representatives from each relevant department of Council, and which meets as regularly as necessary.

\* Design a program for identification and action in regard to all non-complying developments. Report to Council by October.

*Ford quarry*  
\* Design procedures for the Development Assessment to be carried out for Council projects where required in accordance with Parts 4 and 5 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act and by the Local Government Act.

\* Respond promptly to written and verbal complaints.

\* A qualified planner will be available every day by appointment and an inquiry response system will be designed by June.

\* Provide to staff and Aldermen, by September, a set of guidelines on the legal requirements concerning the provision of information to members of the public.

**Strategy 3** Ensure that Council's development functions are efficiently implemented.

# DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT

(Cont..)

- Actions 1990**
- \* In most cases Applications will be determined within 14 days; if an Application has to be referred to Council, within 28 days; where Applications have to be advertised, within 37 days and for complex Applications within 55 days.
  - \* Undertake a review of the Development Assessment procedures by May and institute a timetable of processing steps by December.
  - \* Provide Council with quarterly statistics on the processing of Development Applications.
  - \* Institute the use of workload recording sheets by March.
  - \* Provide a Development Application checklist for Council counter staff to reduce delays created by incomplete documentation and train staff in their use by February.
  - \* Provide advisory leaflets for the use of prospective applicants starting in January.
  - \* The Development Control Unit will be available on request for discussions with developers prior to the submission of Development Applications and provide professional advice.

**Strategy 4** Assess and obtain appropriate contributions from developers for relevant Council services and facilities.

- Actions 1990**
- \* Developers will be advised of the required (Section 94) contribution when the Development Application is approved (an indication of likely contributions can be provided in advance).

**Strategy 5** Improve the cost-effectiveness of Council's development functions.

- Actions 1990**
- \* Review the development costs on which assessment fees are based by December.
  - \* Review Council's charges for written enquiries on the development potential of land by March.
  - \* Discuss pending appeals with applicants prior to a court hearing in order to avert the action and prosecute only after adequate notice and discussion with an offender.
  - \* Investigate income-generating activities of other Councils by September.

**Strategy 6** Develop computer resources to improve the efficiency of development assessment.

- Actions 1990**
- \* Review the present computer applications and recommend on improvements by June.

# LAND USE PLANNING

## STRATEGIES FOR 1992 AND 1990 ACTION PLAN

**BUDGET ALLOCATION:** \$120,000 (0.4%)

**STAFF RESOURCES:** 1.9

**RESPONSIBLE PERSON:** Peter Reynders - Chief Planner

### PURPOSE

To facilitate the best possible land usage by applying acceptable planning principles and innovative techniques, and by consulting all sectors of the community, including other statutory bodies with specialist knowledge.

**Strategy 1** Prepare and implement relevant Local Environment and Development Control Plans and implement other Council codes and policies.

- Actions 1990**
- \* Commence the Town Centre Study, including a review of the retail strategy, by March.
  - \* Exhibit, and widely promote, the reviewed City wide draft Local Environment Plan by June ; process the responses by August.
  - \* Prepare relevant Development Control Plans for areas covered by the City wide Local Environment Plan by June.
  - \* Review the residential and rural residential strategies by November.
  - \* Design and implement by December an improved data base for development- related information for access at a charge by residents and/or organisations.
  - \* Rural landscape study to be assessed by December.

# POLLUTION CONTROL

## STRATEGIES FOR 1992 AND 1990 ACTION PLAN

**BUDGET ALLOCATION:** \$155,030 (0.5%)

**STAFF RESOURCES:** 2.0

**RESPONSIBLE PERSON:** Warwick Sherring - Acting Chief Health and Building Surveyor  
Jim Ward - Street sweeping.

### PURPOSE

To reduce water, air, noise and natural area pollution and to ensure that relevant statutes and other requirements are implemented by responding to complaints, investigating, sampling, testing and conducting eradication/removal programs for pollutants; to maintain the streets and gutters of the central areas of Lismore in a clean and healthy state.

**Strategy 1** Maintain a regular water sampling program.

**Actions 1990** \* Conduct a quarterly water sampling program.

**Strategy 2** Develop a program of pollution and siltation monitoring of the Wilson's river.

**Actions 1990** \* Assess watercourse contamination and develop a monitoring program by July, 1990, (subject to receiving funding for this project under the Local Government Development Program).

\* On complaint, lobby relevant Government authorities and advise offending industry of action.

**Strategy 3** Implement a regular Legionella monitoring of air-conditioning systems, including inspection and sampling.

**Actions 1990** \* Conduct sampling when possible. (This may have to be varied to meet the requirements under pending legislation.)

**Strategy 4** Monitor noise sources.

**Actions 1990** \* Investigate complaints promptly according to priority.

**Strategy 5** Assist the State Pollution Control Commission by investigating existing industrial operations for compliance with State Pollution Control Commission requirements including air pollution.

**Actions 1990** \* Inspect when a complaint is received and refer to the State Pollution Control Commission, assisting where possible.

**Strategy 6** Sample and monitor public pools and spas.

**Actions 1990** \* Sample within 12 hours when a complaint is received.

## POLLUTION CONTROL

(Cont..)

**Strategy 7**    Ensure that Council is informed on issues of environmental concern requiring input and assessment.

**Actions 1990**    \* Provide reports to Council when requested or essential.

**Strategy 8**    Ensure that all Council's operations comply with public health and public safety requirements.

**Actions 1990**    \* Investigate when a complaint is received or when requested to do so by Council.

**Strategy 9**    To provide an efficient street and gutter cleaning service for the central areas of Lismore.

**Actions 1990**    \* Clean the streets and gutters on a daily basis with the existing street sweeping machine.

                    \* Collect loose paper and other objects from the footpaths in the central shopping area 2 mornings a week.

                    \* Replace the street litter bins in the Central Business District with 240 litre fixed bins by June.

# COMMERCIAL UNDERTAKINGS

## STRATEGIES FOR 1992 AND 1990 ACTION PLAN

**BUDGET ALLOCATION:** \$3,775,222 (13.2%)

**STAFF RESOURCES:** 26.3

**RESPONSIBLE PERSON:** Col Starr - Workshop Manager (Plant)  
Tom Stockton - Assistant Works Engineer (Saleyards)  
Bob Gates - Deputy City Engineer (Quarries, gravel pits)

*QUARRIES*

### PURPOSE

To operate and maintain Council's plant, quarries, saleyards and gravel pits as efficient and effective operations and, where possible, to be self supporting and profitable; also to undertake private works at a profit to Council.

### Plant

**Strategy 1** Increase the availability of Council's fleet so that it may be fully utilised for its designed task.

**Actions 1990**

- \* Review existing plant hire rates by April.
- \* Provide an annual forward plan by November.

**Strategy 2** Have all of Council's fleet in a roadworthy condition for safe operation at all times.

**Actions 1990**

- \* Implement an efficient lube-servicing system by March.
- \* Develop and implement a computerised maintenance system by November.

**Strategy 3** Ensure that all of Council's fleet is operated efficiently by trained operators.

**Actions 1990**

- \* Provide training and tuition for all operators/drivers by June.
- \* Implement a licence register for Council employees by August.

**Strategy 4** All future plant purchases to be planned in advance and the relevant Department Heads consulted prior to a decision to purchase.

**Actions 1990**

- \* Planned plant purchase for 1990, dependent on finances, is:

. Replacement of 30 items of plant with 1 excavator, 1 wheel loader, 1 grader, 1 street sweeper, 1 garbage compactor, 1 backhoe-loader, 1 self-propelled roller, 1

# COMMERCIAL UNDERTAKINGS

(Cont..)

agricultural tractor, 8 tandem tipping trucks, 7 table-top trucks, 1 station wagon, 2 utilities and 1 van.

. Additional purchase of 1 tri-axle float.

**Strategy 5** Investigate the possibility of converting part of Council's fleet to LPG fuel.

**Actions 1990** \* Continue testing one converted vehicle for feasibility.

## Blakebrook Quarry

**Strategy 1** Produce and supply adequate quantities of quarry products to meet Council's requirements.

**Actions 1990** \* Introduce a pit-based crushing unit for the production of crushed gravel and roadbase by July.

**Strategy 2** Market and sell excess products over and above Council's usage.

**Actions 1990** \* Approach operators within the Lismore City area on the possibility of their acting as an agency for Council to supply and deliver to small quantity buyers as necessary.

\* Review all discount allowances for bulk purchases by March.

**Strategy 3** Operate and manage the facility to ensure a profit on operations.

**Actions 1990** \* Issue of individual invoices for purchases to be accounted for and mailed to the buyer within 14 days.

\* Monthly statements to be forwarded on all outstanding amounts.

\* Expenditure to be monitored on a 4-6 week basis.

**Strategy 4** Provide for the rehabilitation of Council's quarries.

**Actions 1990** \* Establish a reserve funded on a rate per tonne produced.

## Saleyards

**Strategy 1** Provide a facility to the Meat and Livestock Industry in the local area which meets the standard required by the NSW Meat Industry Authority.

# COMMERCIAL UNDERTAKINGS

(Cont..)

- Actions 1990**
- \* Remove and replace one loading/unloading ramp by November.
  - \* Prepare a priority listing of all works required by October.

**Strategy 2**    **Operate and manage the facility to ensure a profit on operations.**

- Actions 1990**
- \* Accounts to saleyard users to be issued monthly.
  - \* Expenditure to be monitored on a 4-6 week basis.

## Gravel Pits

**Strategy 1**    **Supply gravel for Council's maintenance and construction works and for private works undertaken by Council.**

- Actions 1990**
- \* Operate existing 28 pits in a safe manner throughout 1990.
  - \* Investigate the possibility of reopening and/or extending closed and exhausted pits by December.

## Private Works

**Strategy 1**    **Improve Council's efficiency by undertaking private works to fill gaps in Council's road construction and maintenance program.**

- Actions 1990**
- \* Undertake private maintenance works when requested and when Council is undertaking its own maintenance in the area.
  - \* Undertake private construction work when requested if there is a gap in Council's own construction program.

# ANCILLARY FACILITIES

## STRATEGIES FOR 1992 AND 1990 ACTION PLAN

**BUDGET ALLOCATION:** \$516,285 (1.9%)

**STAFF RESOURCES:** 2.8

**RESPONSIBLE PERSON:** Bill MacDonald - Engineering Assistant (Street Lighting)  
Eugene Besh - Works Engineer (Car Parking)  
Bob Gates - Deputy City Engineer

### PURPOSE

To provide adequate street lighting and car parking facilities for the community and to operate and/or maintain ferries, wharves and boat ramps under Council's control.

#### **Strategy 1**    **Extend street lights to new subdivisions.**

**Actions 1990**    \* Extend street lights as requested by residents in new subdivisions.

#### **Strategy 2**    **Provide additional car parking facilities.**

**Actions 1990**    \* Construct temporary car park in University grounds in Magellan Street by April.  
\* Construct Pritchard Park Car park by June.  
\* All new developments will provide on-site parking or cash contributions.  
\* Review the developer (S94) contribution to parking by October to maintain them at an economic level.

#### **Strategy 3**    **Maintain ferries, wharves and jetties at existing standards.**

**Actions 1990**    \* Provide an equal share, together with Richmond River Shire, to maintain and operate the Broadwater ferry.  
\* Examine feasibility of partial restoration and decking of that portion of the old Railway wharf which is still sound by September. If practicable, funds to be sought in the 1991 estimates.  
\* Maintain existing wharves at the Rowing Club and Dungarubba.