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Establishing Standards for Social Infrastructure

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ESTABLISHING STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

August 2005

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose of this paper

This paper has been commissioned by the UQ Boilerhouse Community Engagement Centre on behalf of a working group comprising representatives from the Brisbane City Council, Ipswich City Council, Gold Coast City Council and the Local Government Association of Queensland. The paper has been commissioned to review available literature and other documentation with the following aims:

- To provide definitions of soft and hard infrastructure and outline the reasons why soft infrastructure is important;
- To identify what standards are currently being used in respect to community infrastructure;
- To determine what methods have been used to develop standards for "hard to quantify" infrastructure; and
- To provide recommendations on what needs to occur to ensure there is a priority focus on an appropriate provision of soft infrastructure

This review has been conducted through a search of a range of academic databases that provide access to peer-reviewed articles on the subject and a more general search of internet resources to identify other relevant material.

Overview of the literature

It should be noted that this topic was the source of some discussion and research in the early 1990's when governments across Australia moved to establish benchmarks to cost the provision of community services. At this time there were also trends towards output based funding and competitive tendering for non-government organisations providing social services.

Since that time there has been limited literature specifically on this issue. However over the past ten years there have been other related developments, including a significant amount of published material and epidemiological research on the social determinants of health. This research links relative social and economic equality with lower crime rates and other social outcomes. An important aspect of this work is that it quantifies the health costs for individuals of a lack of attention to social and community infrastructure.

There has also been a rise in interest around related concepts such as social capital, community capacity building and social exclusion/inclusion. However, the utility of these related concepts is hampered by factors such as definitional issues, difficulties in operationalising the concepts and lack of agreement on how to measure them. Despite these difficulties, there is a growing awareness by governments of the importance of social factors for achieving broader public policy outcomes.

Overview of this report

This paper adopts a social sustainability framework to explore the issue of social infrastructure. It outlines a cost benefit analysis of the importance of social capital and well planned social infrastructure.

On the basis of relevant research and through case studies, the paper indicates the costs to government and communities of not giving appropriate attention to social infrastructure needs and requirements.

The report considers the distinction between ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ infrastructure, the relationship between the two and the importance of incorporating both aspects in planning local communities.

Consideration is given to developments in other jurisdictions in measuring social sustainability and establishing standards for social infrastructure that assist in the planning of new developments and redevelopment of local communities.

The paper supports the development of standards as a guide to the planning and provision of social infrastructure, underpinned by the key principles of access, equity and community engagement.

THE COSTS AND BENEFITS OF SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Social and community infrastructure and services are provided in response to the needs of communities. They enhance the quality of life, equity, law and order, stability and social well being through community support; safety and security; sports; recreation and culture; justice; housing; health and education.'[1]

This paper will adopt the words 'social infrastructure' to denote what has often been termed community infrastructure or social and community infrastructure. It includes both soft and hard infrastructure around services and processes that enhance the social capacity of communities. Social infrastructure can be broadly categorised as:

- health,
- individual, family and community support
- education;
- arts and culture;
- information;
- sport and recreation;
- housing;
- community development;
- employment and training;
- legal and public safety;
- emergency services; and
- public and community transport.

Over the past decade or more, governments across the developed world are now recognising the mistakes and associated costs involved in failing to provide for adequate social infrastructure in particular local communities. There is recognition that a number of metropolitan and regional areas have been hard hit as a result of factors such as structural changes in the economy, changed patterns of employment and income distribution and demographic and social changes. However, the failure to make adequate provision for social infrastructure in the past has exacerbated the problems for these areas.

Consequently, particular localities have been left in a state of extreme disadvantage but with few social support services to buffer the effects of these changes. In response, governments are now faced with attempting to apply remedial measures to compensate for previous under-provision. For example, the UK government has embarked on an ambitious initiative which is investing almost £3Billion over 10 years to address the chronic under-provision of social infrastructure in 88 local government areas in England. Similarly, most Australia states are undertaking initiatives of a similar nature (but at a lesser scale) to target areas with deficient social infrastructure. One of the limitations to focusing primarily on the physical aspects of community infrastructure is that it often neglects those factors, which are essential to the viability of the community facility, namely services and support structures of the community.
Over the past 10 years or more, there is a growing body of evidence that the economic benefits of providing social infrastructure far out-weight the costs of provision and result in a net return on investment. Whilst this evidence is largely derived from overseas

[1] Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan (for Consultation). Office of Urban Management. Brisbane, October 2004. p.67

studies, the implications of this body of work are nevertheless highly relevant and applicable to the Australian context.

Within the Australian context, work on cost-benefit analysis is not as developed in terms of social infrastructure. However, a number of credible research institutes in the United States have now developed sophisticated approaches to undertaking cost-benefit analysis relating to this area. These institutes include the Rand Corporation and the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP). Some consistent messages that arise from this research including the following:

- Washington State Institute for Public Policy has calculated a benefit-cost ratio of over $2 per dollar of cost for some pre-kindergarten education programs and benefit-cost ratios of up to $11 per dollar of cost for some youth development programs[2];
- In a similar study, the Rand Corporation has calculated a net return of $2.60 for every dollar invested in providing universal pre-school education in California[3]. These results are consistent with the WSIPP research.
- In a longitudinal study focusing on the Perry Pre-school program in Michigan, it was demonstrated that the program produced savings to government more than twice the program costs. When the benefits to the rest of society were also factored in, the ration rose by a factor of four to one[4].
- A UK Study reported by Marmot and Wilkinson in the British Medical Journal suggests that for every $1 invested in community networks and services, $10 were saved in costs on poor health, reduced crime and better employment outcomes, amongst other things.[5]

The message from this research is that investment in social infrastructure has an economic dividend as well as a social one. Put simply, it makes good economic sense to invest in the provision of social infrastructure. The need to therefore incorporate social infrastructure requirements in planning and redevelopment proposals has become an increasing requisite for both the private and public sectors.

[2] Aos, S., Lieb, R., Mayfield, J., Miller, M. and Pennucci, A. (2004), *Benefits and Costs of Prevention and Early Intervention Programs for Youth*, Washington State Institute for Public Policy, Olympia.

[3] Karoly, L and Bigelow, J. (2005), *The Economics of Investing in Universal Pre-school Education in California*, The Rand Corporation, Santa Monica.

[4] Karoly, L. et al, (2001), Assessing the Costs and Benefits of Early Childhood Intervention Programs, The Rand Corporation, Santa Monica.

5 Marmot, M & Wilkinson , R.G (2001). “Psychosocial and material pathways in the relation between income and health: a response to Lynch et al”. *British Medical Journal* 322, 1233-1236.

SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE – A SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY PERSPECTIVE

In recent years the concept of "social capital" has received increasing attention as accumulating evidence demonstrates the dependence between social capital and a wide range of desirable outcomes: economic success, improved school performance, decreased crime, higher levels of voting and better health. Social capital has been defined in the following terms:

> The social capital of a society includes the institutions, the relationships, the attitudes and values that govern interactions among people and contribute to economic and social development. Social capital is not simply the sum of institutions, which underpin society; it is also the glue that holds them together. It includes the shared common sense of 'civic' responsibility that makes society more than just a collection of individuals (World Bank 1998).

The Saguaro Seminar on Civic engagement at the John F Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University in October 1999, reported on a social capital benchmark survey undertaken in 40 communities across the USA. Their subsequent report "*Better Together"* noted the benefits of social capital:

> Economic studies demonstrate that social capital makes individuals less prone to depression, firms more competitive and nations more prosperous.
>
> Psychological research indicates that abundant social capital makes individuals less prone to depression and more inclined to help others.
>
> Epidemiological reports show that social capital decreases the rate of suicide, colds, heart attacks, strokes and cancer, and improves individuals' ability to fight or recover from illnesses once they have struck.
>
> Sociology studies suggest that social capital reduces crime, juvenile delinquency, teenage pregnancy, child abuse, welfare dependency, drug abuse and increases student test scores and graduation. [6]

Increasing requirements have been placed on private investors and all levels of government to maintain the Triple bottom Line - that is Economic, Environmental and Social sustainability[7].

Social sustainability refers to both a process and an outcome. It is the capacity of a society to provide for the safety, care, health, education, leisure, and creative expression of its members in a stable reliable and ongoing manner.

The following definition of social sustainability was developed by the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD)

[6] Putnam, R & Feldstein, L. Better Together. The report of the Saguaro seminar: civic engagement in America. John F Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University 2000.

[7] Triple Bottom Line is a phrase coined in 1987 by author and management consultant, John Elkington in his book "Cannibals with Forks". (The title of the book is drawn from a question asked by the Polish poet Stanislau Lec who asked, *"Is it progress if a cannibal uses a fork?"*)

Social Sustainability: A Definition

> For a community to function and be sustainable, the basic needs of its residents must be met. A socially sustainable community must have the ability to maintain and build on its own resources and have the resiliency to prevent and/or effectively address problems in the future. Two types or levels of resources in the community are available to build social sustainability) – individual or human capacity, and social or community capacity.
>
> Individual or human capacity refers to the attributes and resources that individuals can contribute to their own well being, and to the wellbeing of the community as a whole. Such resources include education, skills, health, values and leadership. Social or community capacity is the basic framework of society and includes mutual trust, reciprocity, relationships, communications, and interconnectedness between groups. It is these types of attributes that enable individuals to work together to improve their quality of life and to ensure that such improvements are sustainable.[8]

A socially sustainable community is one that aligns closely with the principles of social justice. More specifically social sustainability includes a focus not just on principles and processes, but also on achieving outcomes such as the following:

- **Equity of access** to appropriate services;
- **Effective and viable networks of community groups/organisations and mechanisms** to facilitate community participation and self-determination;
- **Effective and appropriate transport systems** and accessibility for all members of the community;
- **Access** to information and life-long education;
- **Demographic diversity** – a range of lifecycle groups, cultures and interests;
- **Sense of place** so people identify with and *like* the community they live in;
- **Affordable and appropriate housing;**
- **Community and personal safety;**
- **Provision of support for local businesses and of local employment opportunities including for socially disadvantaged groups;**
- **Environmental quality;**
- **Physically attractive neighbourhoods and town centres with identifiable lifestyle features; and**
- **An integrated approach** to addressing environmental, economic and social needs[9]

The implications of a social sustainability framework to infrastructure planning would be to ensure, for example, that not only are there transport services but that they are accessible to older people or people with a disability; that not only are there adequate levels of housing but there is fair and equal access to affordable housing; that employment opportunities exist within local communities and that there is information about, as well as access to, a range of social and community services and opportunities. Most of all it means that there are local strategies in place that assist individuals and communities to develop relationships, communication systems and mutual trust between groups of people.

[8] Definition developed by Rick Gates, City of Vancouver, memo to GCRD SIS, June 12, 2002 with reference to the writings of Robert Goodland and the World Bank.

[9] Nesbitt,H. *Social Sustainability and the planning comfort zone.* RAPI conference papers p7

Social infrastructure is more than simply the provision of physical facilities. Therefore in considering the broader context of social sustainability, a necessary factor must be the elements known as “soft” infrastructure as well as physical or “hard’ infrastructure.

‘HARD’ AND ‘SOFT’ INFRASTRUCTURE

A distinction is often made between so-called “hard” infrastructure and “soft” infrastructure. “Hard” infrastructure is generally better recognised and understood by the general public and policy makers. This is less so with regard to “soft” infrastructure.

What is ‘hard’ infrastructure?

There is hard infrastructure which is focused on provision of basic utilities i.e. water, gas and electricity, waste, transport provision (roads, rail, air) that provide the framework in which a community transacts economic, social and environmental activity. Then there is hard infrastructure such as community facilities and public buildings which are essential in supporting community life. They meet the community developmental, recreational, social and cultural needs of people in our community and neighbourhoods. Local government plays a key role in the provision of community facilities such as libraries, town halls, recreation and cultural facilities, meeting rooms, child care, office spaces for community groups, community and neighbourhood centres and spaces for young and older people. State and Federal Governments also have a prescribed role in developing hard infrastructure as can be demonstrated by the Queensland Government’s recently released South-east Queensland Infrastructure Plan.

It is therefore not surprising that when consideration is given to social infrastructure, it is often seen in terms of tangible “hard” infrastructure – those that are visible to the eye such as community centres, schools, libraries and transport infrastructure.

Architects and planners often describe social infrastructure in terms of inputs and in many respects an initial response will be a physical infrastructure response. For example the response to education will be to be build a school, the response to community development is often to build a community centre.

In 2001, Dr Allison Ziller, a sociologist and planning consultant undertook a survey of 135 practicing planners in Sydney. The survey provided an opportunity for planners to consider what they would do to achieve good community development if they were the senior planner in charge of a large town somewhere on the coast of NSW. In the scenario they had an unlimited budget, excellent access to research and community consultation and they were to imagine that the final decision was all their call. It is interesting to note that the majority, 57%, proposed to rely on physical initiatives like buildings and urban design.[10]

[10] Ziller, A. *The community is not a place and why it matters – case study: Green Square*. Paper prepared for State of Australian Cities National Conference. Sydney. 3-5 December 2003.

What is 'soft' infrastructure?

The notion of so-called "soft" infrastructure has tended to be used in an ill-defined way and usually refers to the provision of human services as a way of distinguishing between these services and facilities and the provision of more commonly recognised "hard" infrastructure facilities such as roads, sewerage, water supply and similar facilities that are essential for community functioning.

Whilst the provision of "hard" infrastructure is mostly taken for granted, the importance and role of "soft" infrastructure is less understood and recognised by the general public and, at times, policy makers.

The problems have been that 'soft' infrastructure is seen as:

- Intangible or hard to define;
- difficult to measure and cannot always be reduced to quantitative indicators; and
- is often described in subjective and qualitative terms that may not be readily understood.

"Soft" infrastructure involves responses to both the needs of communities, while simultaneously building the capacity of local people and groups to respond to current and future needs. It is not simply about providing physical assets but about enhancing skills and knowledge and access to a range of appropriate services and responses.

These "soft" infrastructure responses enhance both an individual's health and community well-being through development of:

- Equitable, accessible and appropriate community services
- Individual skills, knowledge and abilities
- Local networks, relationships and collaborative responses

They are consistent with the human and community capacity of social sustainability.

There are generally three essential elements to putting in place sustainable social infrastructure. These are:

- Capital resources to finance the provision of physical assets such as buildings, facilities and equipment;
- Recurrent or non-capital resources to enable the provision of ongoing staffing, operational and maintenance costs of infrastructure provision;
- Governance arrangements to ensure there is appropriate planning, management and accountability for the on-going provision of infrastructure.

For example a developer using capital resources builds a road. It is understood that the road will require maintenance and repairs (recurrent resources) over time and that someone needs to maintain responsibility (governance) for undertaking these tasks. If the road is on Council land, the local government authority will provide road gangs to maintain the roads and will undertake responsibility for its ongoing upkeep and management.

Similarly a developer might build a school however that would only occur if there were a contract with the state Government or a private education institution to provide the teaching staff and operating costs to run the school and maintain the building.
In contrast it is not unusual to see a community centre or facility constructed with no provision made for ongoing recurrent costs (staff and operating costs) or governance arrangements.

> Planners therefore also need to pay attention to what makes a community facility viable after it has been built. If community facilities are worth building they are worth managing properly. In many instances community buildings have been planned and built without any consideration to the financing of its management and on-going operation with the result that some community centres become little more than halls for hire. Part of their establishment should include determining what kind of governing body the facility requires. The days when community facilities could be managed by a few well-intentioned residents are going fast. The GST and insurance and industrial issues mean that governance of community facilities requires considerable skill and expertise.[11]

One local example of this is Forest Lake, which has established itself as a benchmark for fully planned urban community development. In 1999, the Urban Institute of Australia judged Australia's number one community to be Forest Lake. This community was established with careful consideration given to a range of social and community infrastructure, yet the community centre was established with no operating funding or clear governance arrangements leading to the centre's management committee subsequently approaching the state government for funding.

The following case studies show that both hard and soft infrastructure is needed to establish socially sustainable communities. The three selected case studies offer a series of different perspectives in terms of the need for social infrastructure in local communities. They demonstrate the differences experienced within a local community of providing limited social infrastructure (both hard and soft), a community plan that provides mostly hard social infrastructure and lastly a community that is developed with attention given to both soft and hard infrastructure components as identified by local residents.

[11] Nesbitt, H and Ziller, A. *Social Sustainability and the planning comfort zone.* RAPI conference papers pp 12-13

CASE STUDIES - A NEED FOR SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY.

The first case study focuses on an urban area in Western Sydney, which demonstrates poor planning – both socially and spatially.

Case Study 1– Macquarie Fields (Limited Social Infrastructure Planning)

Macquarie Fields was established in the 1970's when a large proportion of people were relocated from inner Sydney to this public housing community on the city's fringe. Employment opportunities were envisaged that never materialised and transport and other social and community infrastructure options were not planned and provided.

In late February 2005, Macquarie Fields hit international headlines as a result of the riots that occurred, sparked by the deaths of two teenagers during a police pursuit. However many believe that infrastructure problems rather than policing were behind the tensions experienced in Macquarie Fields.

Dr Murray Lee from the University of Western Sydney, Centre for Social Justice and Social Change carried out research in the Macquarie Fields area over the period 2002-2003 asking locals about crime in the area and what they thought were the risk factors. "Back then, residents identified underlying problems such as lack of public services and poor public transport, education, interactions with police, boredom of its young people, the geographic isolation of the housing estate and its 'Radburn'[12] design plan with its myriad of linking lanes and alleyways as potential fuel for criminal activity". [13]

Macquarie Fields is characterised by high unemployment, large concentration of Public Housing (29% compared to 5.3% for the Greater Sydney area) and crisis accommodation, high levels of alcohol and drug abuse, and limited public transport facilities.

Access to basic community facilities is a major issue. Residents have complained that the Youth centre is only open for a few hours at a time three days a week and Campbelltown, where most services are located, is nine kilometres away, making it difficult for young people to access them. The research by Lee highlights the problem: " … the infrastructure for the children and the teenagers, there's none, not a thing … our kids have got nowhere to go".[14]

The costs to the local community and the government of the riots in early 2005 were high – in terms of economics (costs of property damage and human resource efforts of police), and the personal safety and social well-being of residents.

Lee notes that the public reaction to the riots tells us a lot about how society understands crime. "It's nothing new for groups of extremely socially disadvantaged people to dissent when they feel they are not been properly governed".[15]

[12] Named after a private development built at Radburn, New Jersey in 1927, this type of housing features the front of houses linked by pedestrian paths across large open parks and service roads to accommodate garages at the back.

[13] University of Western Sydney News Site 28/05/05

[14] Lee, M, *Crime and Social Isolation: Beyond Moral Panics and Bad Parents.* Presentation to Mission Australia's Social Policy in the City seminar series. 19 April 2005.

[15] Ibid

The second case study provides an alternative example of an area that was redeveloped with social sustainability principles as part of its initial focus. However, subsequent social planning documents have replaced social issues with social considerations and the focus has shifted to hard infrastructure (community facilities) albeit with a number of guiding social principles.

Case Study 2 – Green Square Town Centre (Planning framework with focus on community facilities)

The urban renewal area known as Green Square comprises 387 hectares of land in one of Sydney's oldest industrial areas. It is located in the South Sydney City LGA between the Sydney CBD to the north and the Sydney International Airport and Port Botany to the South. Historically, Green Square has been associated with manufacturing and other industry much of which has relocated to areas better suited to their present day operations.

The developments at Green Square were first envisioned in the Green Square Draft Structural Master Plan developed in 1997. The South Sydney Development Corporation (SSDC) commissioned a Community plan, which was subsequently prepared by expert consultants in 1998. The plan, which was prepared well before any construction had commenced, adopted six planning principles including sustainability, relative social equality and social exclusion and included such options as:

- an Electronic Communications Plan for the Town Centre
- a Green Square Education and Employment Strategy
- an educative or cultural facility located in the town centre
- a Green Square Partnership to sponsor the Electronics Communication Plan and the Education and Employment Strategy
- a Green Square Forum as another mechanism to involve a diverse range of groups and individuals in the development of Green Square and
- affordable housing throughout the growth centre.

Unfortunately many of these proposals were not adopted or implemented. There was no Green Square Partnership or Green Square Forum implemented and nothing progressed on the cultural or educative centre. A static and non-interactive Green Square website was introduced and a limited proportion of affordable housing properties were constructed.[16]

A subsequent needs assessment carried out in 2002 (just four years later) has established that community facility provisions in the South Sydney Section 94 Contributions Plan are inadequate in terms of the needs of the new resident and worker populations of Green Square. The Green Square Planning Framework identifies a number of social principles however, the Green Square Community facilities S94 paper prepared in December 2002 focuses primarily on physical infrastructure and identifies a list of benchmarks to guide proposals about what level of community facilities need to be established.

An article published on June 2, 2003 in the Sydney Morning Herald found that luring employers to Green Square was proving difficult and as a result the developer of the commercial zone has applied to South Sydney Council to replace much of the office and retail space with residential units.

The author of the original plan states: "If you visit the area you will see that the development of an enclave and the contrast of socio-economic difference we envisaged has commenced"[17]

[16] Ziller, A. *The community is not a place and why it matters – case study: Green Square*. Paper prepared for State of Australian Cities National Conference. Sydney. 3-5 December 2003. p12

[17] ibid p14.

The Third case study provides an example of a planning framework that was prepared with social sustainability principles. It involves the development and implementation of both hard and soft infrastructure initiatives that are based on resident feedback and community needs.

Case Study 3 – Vancouver City Council (Social Sustainability Planning Framework)

In 1992, Vancouver City Council asked citizens for ideas about Vancouver's future. Over the following three years more than 20,000 people participated in developing a shared vision for Vancouver's future. On June 6, 1995 Vancouver City Council adopted CityPlan: a city wide plan that provides a framework for deciding City programs, priorities and actions over the next 20 years. CityPlan provides directions on a range of topics, from transportation to arts, housing to community services. It includes such things as:

- Each community will have a neighbourhood centre to provide a "heart" for the neighbourhood.
- There will be a greater variety of housing to meet the needs of people of different incomes and those at different stages of their lives (older people, single people and families).
- There will be a range accessible and community based services.
- There will be a focus on a safer community by implementing crime prevention initiatives and identifying and addressing social issues
- Each community will have a supply of affordable housing.
- Arts and culture initiatives will be provided to increase people's learning and reflect the city's diverse cultural heritage
- Diverse public places will be created to make the area more welcoming
- Diverse employment opportunities will be created including jobs closer to home.
- Travel alternatives such as walking, cycling and transit will be prioritised ahead of private vehicles transport.

In 1997 the Community Visions Program was launched to bring CityPlan to the neighbourhood level. This program entails communities working with City staff over a two year period to create their visions for the future, based on CityPlan directions and community needs and aspirations. Community Plans have been established in 6 neighbourhoods and are currently being finalised in 2 other areas. In those neighbourhoods with approved Community Visions, City staff and the community have started working on making their visions a reality: dealing with traffic issues around schools; community clean ups; reviewing zoning in shopping areas; addressing traffic issues on major roads and developing better ways for residents to communicate with each other.

In addition, the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) adopted a growth management strategy known as the Liveable Region Strategic Plan (LRSP) in 1996. As part of the review of the LRSP, the overall framework for regional planning evolved from developing *complete communities* to *sustainability.*

The Sustainable Region Initiative (SRI) is a comprehensive approach to building a pleasant, prosperous, and resilient future for the citizens of Greater Vancouver. Although begun by the Greater Vancouver Regional District, the SRI is not intended to be a single agency initiative, but is meant to be undertaken by everyone concerned with the future of the region. There are roles for citizens, governments, business groups, social agencies, academia, and others. The SRI is not a single-purpose plan or strategy, but a conceptual framework-a management philosophy-that determines how plans and strategies will be developed, adopted, implemented, and evaluated.

The SRI provide a framework, vision, and action plan for Greater Vancouver based on the concept of sustainability that embraces economic prosperity, community well-being, and environmental integrity**.**

What are the key messages from these Case Studies?

The three Case Studies presented above provide a range of different scenarios and contexts that highlight the importance of the provision of adequate social infrastructure. They can be characterised in the following way:

- ***Planning without social impact assessment:***
  With Macquarie Fields, while some basic hard infrastructure was provided in terms of roads, shops and affordable housing, other 'hard' social infrastructure needs were omitted (for example, a community centre). Limited consideration was given to other 'soft' infrastructure requirements such as access to employment and transport, demographic diversity and the establishment of local services and strategies that develop community cohesion. The result of this absence of attention to social infrastructure was a high profile incident that had significant economic and social costs for the community and government.

- ***Spatially based Planning:***
  While the Green Square proposal provides an example of social infrastructure planning that is significantly advanced in comparison to the planning of Macquarie Fields, the tendency in terms of social infrastructure has been to focus on the tangible hard infrastructure aspects – community facilities. This limited focus has not been sufficient in terms of addressing issues of equity, access, inclusion and quality of life. Only time will tell if the current social infrastructure planning goes far enough.

- ***People based planning- community engagement and joint ownership of all stakeholders:***
  From the Vancouver case study, it can be seen that CityPlan included initiatives that are not just about providing community facilities but ensuring that there is access to them; a focus on demographic diversity, affordable and appropriate housing and a sense of 'place' so that people identify with and *like* the community they live in. The indications thus far are that this approach is proving a success – both in terms of enhancing local neighbourhoods as well as successfully accommodating the city's significant population growth.

There are a number of key messages arising from these case studies:

- The failure to provide adequate and sustainable community infrastructure results in long-term costs and consequences. This is particularly so in areas that are already disadvantaged or show signs of the potential to become increasingly disadvantaged over the medium to long term.

  Governments within Australia are now coming to this realisation and have put in place a range of program responses to address the consequences of long-term neglect in the provision of community infrastructure[18]. Whilst Macquarie Fields may seem an extreme example, the reality is that every city and local government area contains pockets of disadvantage that require an injection of infrastructure.

[18] For example, most State Governments, including Queensland, now have in place community renewal or urban renewal strategies targeting areas of disadvantage, whilst the Commonwealth Government has put in place its Strengthening Families and Communities strategy

- Redevelopment of existing urban areas requires a realistic assessment of the full range of community infrastructure that will be required to make a difference and a commitment to the provision of this infrastructure in terms of capital and recurrent resources and ensuring there are appropriate governance arrangements in place to manage and be accountable for this infrastructure.

- The planning and provision of community infrastructure is essentially ***a process*** that requires adequate time and investment to ensure there is open and wide consultation and community ownership of outcomes.

- Community infrastructure planning and provision needs to take place at a number of different levels and scales in a way that harnesses Commonwealth and State government policies and programs but also incorporating local government interests and, most importantly, local resident concerns at the neighbourhood level. The Vancouver case study also highlights the importance of involving regional interests in building social sustainability.

- Providing time, opportunity and resources to enable input and ideas from local residents is essential.

DEVELOPMENT OF STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

In June 2005, the local government sector introduced a strategy on shared asset management arrangements for local government "*Asset Management -from the backroom to the boardroom*". This multifaceted strategy aims to achieve better financial governance and service delivery outcomes in Queensland Councils through improved asset management. More specifically it seeks to:

- Change the culture within Queensland Councils to recognise the pre-eminence of levels of service and community engagement in relation to asset management;
- Change the focus of responsibility for the asset management task from solely technical to a strategic, financial and operational, whole of organisation model; and
- Improve asset management practices across local government in Queensland[19]

Similarly, the South East Queensland Regional Plan outlines strategies to respond to the high growth rate being experienced in the south-east corner of the State. It identifies as key issues for Social infrastructure:

- The need to provide social infrastructure in an efficient and co-ordinated way; and
- The need to prioritise and time the provision of social and community infrastructure and services with new developments.

Both of these documents highlight the need to manage growth and plan developments and communities in a way that supports socially sustainable communities and enhances quality of life. However, in order to provide enhanced levels of social infrastructure there is a sense that in the first instance there needs to be some general consensus, or a least a guide, about what are the desired social outcomes or at the very least some minimum standards around social infrastructure requirements.

As the terms accountability, performance outcomes and triple bottom reporting gain increasing importance in the private and public sectors, there is a growing pressure to develop indicators that measure/evaluate effectiveness but also to identify the standards that should be established in the first instance.

> Performance measurement is an integral part of modern government. It stands behind the creation of targets, contracts and agreements that control service delivery. Good performance information can help departments to develop policy, to manage their resources effectively, to improve Departmental and programme effectiveness and to report their performance to Parliament and the general public, so promoting accountability for public resources.[20]

[19] Local Government Association Inc. Queensland Local Government. *Asset Management from the backroom to the boardroom.* Position Paper June 2005.

[20] Draft NCOSS Framework. Social Results for NSW – measuring the social health of our state.

A report on the assessment of evaluation strategies and tools for place management and community renewal projects prepared by the Albany Consulting Group for the NSW Premier's Department found that:

> evaluation activity surrounding place management or community renewal projects in NSW, Australia and around the world is patchy and sometimes non-existent…. Many projects do not have a clear logic that explains the assumed links between the initial problem or need, the type of intervention that is planned and the results it is supposed to produce."[21]

The implication is that you have to "start before you start". That is, you need to determine what your goals and objectives are from the outset. Similarly in planning a project there needs to be a notion about what are some of the standards or outcomes around social sustainability that you would want to incorporate when considering social infrastructure requirements.

Standards for community facilities

While 'hard' infrastructure requirements are generally well established with distinct guidelines being specified either by particular local authorities or State and Commonwealth agencies the same cannot be said for 'soft' infrastructure.

Within the social infrastructure component of planning, community facility benchmarking standards have been developed by planning consultants and government, to determine the level of community facility infrastructure (hard infrastructure) required to service communities. These have been determined using multiple data sources including:

- Population (projected new residents and workforce),
- age structure,
- gender,
- employment status,
- income, and
- household structure.

These benchmarking standards include a ratio of facilities and/or services to a given population (for example 1 hospital bed for every x population). They are generally described in terms of minimum levels of service.

The following types of community facility benchmarking standards were used to determine community infrastructure requirements in the Green Square redevelopment in South Sydney.

[21] The Albany Consulting Group, *NSW Premier's Department – Assessment of evaluation strategies and tools for place management and community renewal projects*. Final Report. Sydney, NSW May 2002. p7

Facility Type	Standard
Community Art Gallery	1:20,000 – 30,000 people
Arts & Cultural Centre (local)	1:12,000 – 30,000 people
Arts & Cultural Centre (Regional)	1:50,000 – 120,000 people
Recreation Centre	1:30,000 - 50,000 people
Early Childhood Centre	1:4,000 - 6,000 people
Child Care Centre (Long day care)	1:10 places 0-4 year olds
Occasional Care	1:12,000 – 15,000 people
Pre-school	1:4,000 – 6,000 people
OSHC & Vacation Care	1:4,000 – 6,000 people
Neighbourhood Centre	1:3,500 – 15,000 people
Multi-purpose Community Centre	1:15,000-20,000 people
Community hall	Small 1:10,000 people Large 1:20,000 to 30,000
Youth Centre	1:10,000 –20,000 or 1 youth centre per 3,000 people aged 13-19 years
Older persons day care centre/Senior Citizen's Centre	1: 15,000 – 20,000 people

In contrast there has been limited development in terms of "soft" benchmarks. The only similar benchmarking criteria for "soft " infrastructure is Schedule 1 of the *Child Care Regulations 2003 (Qld)* which outlines human resource requirements for Groups in Child Care centres as follows:

Ages of Children	Qualified carer: child ratio	Maximum group size
Birth to 2 years	1: 4	8
Birth to 3 years including at least 1 child aged 3 years	1: 5	10
15 months to 3 years	1: 5	10
2 to 3 years	1: 6	10
2.5 to 3 years	1: 8	16
3 years to 6 years	1: 12	24
4 years to 6 years	1: 13	25
4 to 12 years, including at least one child of more than 6 years	1: 12	No maximum
Ages for which no other entry applies	1: 7	21

However, this only outlines staffing or human resource requirements and does not address the other "soft' infrastructure requirements that are difficult to quantify.

DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE STANDARDS IN OTHER JURISDICTIONS

Nationally and internationally there has been a move towards promoting social sustainability principles in community planning. The trend has often been to develop tools to measure how a community is faring in terms of social capital and/or social sustainability principals rather than develop standards that can be used to guide developments or redevelopments before they have commenced.

For example, in the United States, a Social Capital Benchmark Survey was designed by the Sanguaro Seminar: Civic Engagement in America, a project at the John F Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. The survey averaging 26 minutes, was conducted in 40 US communities by telephone using random- digit-dialling during July to November 2000. It measured the following dimensions of social capital:

- Trust – Social Trust and inter-racial Trust
- Diversity of friendships
- Political Participation – Conventional politics participation and protest politics participation;
- Civic Leadership and Associated Involvement
- Informal Socialising
- Giving and Volunteering
- Faith based engagement
- Healthy economy – healthy environment

The Benchmark survey offers a rich database for researchers who wish to better understand social capital and provides a tool for those communities and organisations to use in program development and evaluation, in part, by enabling relative assessment to other communities and the nation. However, it does not identify what benchmarks or indicators are seen as the optimum in local communities.

Similarly, Vancouver's CityPlan does not go as far as developing standards for social infrastructure; however, it does demonstrate how social sustainability principles can be utilised in undertaking community engagement processes with local neighbourhoods. The principles that were used to guide the development of local plans included:

- Establishment of Neighbourhood Centres
- Neighbourhood Housing Variety
- Distinctive Neighbourhood Character
- Sense of community
- Accessible community-based services
- Working together to promote safety
- Addressing housing costs
- Arts and Culture in a creative city
- New and more diverse public Places
- Diverse economy and jobs closer to home
- Transit, walking and biking as a priority
- Clean air and water

- A vibrant central area
- People involved in decision-making
- Financial accountability

Within Australia, there have been attempts by various councils to identify the goals or outcomes around social infrastructure that they are seeking to achieve. For example the city of Melbourne has recently developed a framework for the provision of social infrastructure. The framework outlines a number of 'service drivers', which influence people's need for and use of social infrastructure (changing social expectations, work patterns, cultural traditions, technology and leisure preferences). It also identifies a suite of social indicators for use as a planning tool to monitor the changes in the social well-being of Melbourne.

In light of the expected continued population growth in South East Queensland over the next twenty years, the establishment of adequate social infrastructure should be fundamental to future planning and development. As outlined previously the South East Queensland Regional Plan identifies a need to provide social infrastructure in an efficient and co-ordinated way. If we use the logic applied by the Albany consulting group that we need to identify from the outset what we are seeking to achieve, in order to identify what we are evaluating at the end of the process, then the development of some sort of standards around social infrastructure seems to make good sense.

Why establish social Infrastructure standards?

The planning and provision of adequate social infrastructure makes sound economic sense in the medium to long term. Apart from the research that highlights the economic advantages of socially sustainable communities in terms of health, employment and reduced crime; planning social infrastructure requirements from the outset reduces the unnecessary and costly expense of addressing social problems in communities in the future.

Establishing a system of hard and soft social infrastructure standards or guidelines has a number of advantages: These include

1. establishing a baseline to guide and assist community participation in decisions relating to the range, type and model of appropriate facilities and services to be developed;
2. providing a means to ensure better accountability of public funds by establishing a framework to assist in the development of objectives/targets of service provision, siting and design of community facilities, service models and management practices;
3. replacing adhoc decision making with a more rational process designed to enable the more efficient allocation of scarce resources;
4. when used with a range of other needs assessment processes and indicators, providing a tool to inform both planning and budgetary mechanisms;
5. establishing a reference point for service provision in rapidly developing communities and in so doing should provide Government with some lead time for the provision of necessary services;
6. achieving a level of consistency of approach in Local Authority Strategic Plans;
7. ensuring the most efficient use of regional resources (e.g. by locating facilities in order to maximise access and site utilisation);

8. more appropriately matching urban development with the capital works and recurrent program budgets of human service agencies, thus ensuring the early/timely commitment of funds at key stages of development;
9. involving affected communities through appropriate, timely consultation and information;
10. ensuring that new release areas are of sufficient size to support basic services; and
11. ensuring flexibility in facility design and in the type and model of service delivery in order to respond appropriately to such things as demographic change, change in need/demand patterns.[22]

Standards are a guide for use in determining how well a preferred result should be achieved. Social infrastructure planning is not a static event but an ongoing process.

> Any system which is developed must be seen as a guide only and should be balanced by local, social, political and economic conditions, needs and priorities and considered in reference to any existing infrastructure in the area. It must be regarded flexibly and developmentally in that the services/facilities, design, size, location, staffing and management may alter significantly in light of such things as demographic change in the local community, changing community expectations and improved models of service delivery. .[23]

It is therefore proposed that standards for social infrastructure should be used as a guideline (similar to the Vancouver CityPlan) subject to the needs and requirements of that local community.

[22] Human Services Infrastructure: a policy paper of the SEQ 2001 Project. Regional Planning Advisory Group Brisbane 1993 pp 69-70

[23] Ibid p 79

CONCLUSION

There are a number of key messages that arise from this literature review relating to the provision of community or social infrastructure. In summary, these are:

- Social infrastructure is essential to achieving a balanced approach to sustainability for local communities. Governments are now realising the costs involved as a result of previous neglect in providing social infrastructure. Macquarie Fields is a high profile example outlining the economic, social and individual costs that are experienced by communities as a result of lack of attention to social infrastructure in past planning schemes.
- The planning and provision of social infrastructure makes sound economic as well as social sense and can result in significant savings to government and a net return to the community in the medium to long term.
- Provision of social infrastructure consists of both 'hard' and 'soft' components. The 'soft' components include three elements of capital resourcing, recurrent (or non-capital) resourcing and ensuring there are appropriate governance arrangements in place to plan, manage and be accountable for infrastructure provision. Too often, attention is only placed on the capital element without adequate consideration of both the recurrent and governance dimensions.
- Social infrastructure provision requires a consideration and assessment of the full range of services and facilities that are required to address the needs of local communities. Such an assessment needs to be directly informed by the views and experiences of local residents. This is a challenging, time consuming and resource intensive exercise.
- Social infrastructure planning and provision needs to take place at a number of different levels ranging from the neighbourhood level to the local government level and through to the level of state and commonwealth governments who carry responsibility for the funding of many programs involved with the provision of social infrastructure. This kind of 'vertical integration' is essential in harnessing the necessary resources to enable adequate provision of social infrastructure.
- The application of standards as an approach to the planning and provision of social infrastructure has an important role to play in achieving social sustainability, underpinned by key principles of access, equity and community engagement.
- Social infrastructure standards provide a number of clear benefits including ensuring a degree of equity and consistency in the provision of services and facilities across local communities according to their needs, providing a more rational process for resource allocation and establishing a mechanism that enables engagement with state and commonwealth budget processes involved in the funding of social infrastructure.

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