Reimagining Community Facilities

Community Engagement Report

Reimagining community facilities consultation ran from 14 May to 30 June 2019 designed to garner community feedback and future vision for our community facilities.

Community facilities provide the infrastructure for the community to undertake activities and interact socially and recreationally in public spaces. This infrastructure also provides meeting spaces and venues for services to be delivered for the benefit of the community.

It is essential that infrastructure be diverse and provide safe and accessible spaces for activities to be undertaken. Community facilities must reflect the needs of the community and do not remain static, requiring multi-purpose and flexible designs to accommodate emerging and future needs.

Challenges

Local governments require innovative solutions to facility and infrastructure design, funding and management arrangements. We are seeking to provide community facilities and infrastructure in an affordable, yet financially sustainable manner.

Opportunities

What has emerged is the opportunity for council and community to be adaptable and work together to share and pool resources to provide affordable and appropriate facilities.

What we heard

"It's heartening to see Councillors open, inviting communications about changes coming - with this slow gentle introduction of how to work together."

Atherton workshop attendee

At the completion of our engagement period, we received over 200 submissions via a combination of methods, including email, Shaping our Tablelands and workshops.

A thematic analysis found common themes:

Community (31%)

Strong communities, connectedness, volunteers, nurturing, sharing, remembering past contributions, about people, changing demographic, where people will want to live.

Access (Issues) (14%)

Insurance, hire costs, liability, access, legacy issues, communications, transport, volunteers (lack of).

Places (13%)

Halls, toilets (actual places of interest captured in sub-theme Places/Facilities)

Natural Environment (13%)

Outdoor recreational areas, beauty, sustainability, capitalise on, tourism, appreciation, retention, why people live here

Future Vision (10%)

Innovation, engaged, sharing, co-location, sustainability, place-making, hubs, collaboration, technology, open to change, understanding limitations, rejuvenation, Council to be facilitative, shared facilities

Active (9%)

Walking/hiking, sports, recreation, Clubs, young people, adventure sports

Culture (7%)

ATSI, retention, arts, music, spaces, community linking, collaboration, library, creativity, important linkages across community, diversity

Distinct (4%)

Each community has its own personality, drivers, history, ways of approaching the future and seemed willing to continuing similar dialogue

"We don't live here because we have to, we live here because we want to."
Malanda workshop attendee

Key insights include:
- Adapting facilities for future needs
- Planning for an ageing population
- Accessibility
- Affordability
- Activating public spaces and places
- Improving the communication about community facilities
- Better understanding of community needs
- Activating under-utilised spaces within the community

Where to from here…

What we discovered was a willingness of community members to engage and explore what is possible in terms of the provision, management and maintenance of community facilities into the future.

The data, including a comprehensive thematic analysis will be used to shape and build a hierarchy of facilities as a framework for a community facility planning strategy. The draft strategy will be informed by evidence-based planning principles.

We will bring the draft strategy back to community for feedback and commence exploring partnership and collaborative opportunities for the implementation.