



Community Infrastructure Plan

Appendix 1

Community Needs Assessment Overview

1 Introduction

As highlighted in Section 6, the City of Kwinana has undertaken a wide series of community research and planning studies and strategies over the last ten years which address the current and future need for community facilities, amenities and services. This extensive community needs assessment underpins the Community Infrastructure Plan and a summary of key studies, strategies and outcomes follows.

2 Community Infrastructure Study

A detailed Community Infrastructure Study was undertaken to identify the needs and priorities for community services and facilities in the then Town of Kwinana in 2004 and a summary of key findings are outlined below.

Demographic Findings

Growth in population particularly in new housing estates will increase the demand for new community services, programs and facilities and will also increase the demand on existing services, many of which are already stretched.

Kwinana is largely made up of young families with a high number of children and young people. This highlights the need to provide family friendly communities with parks, recreation opportunities, child care, community centres and family support programs. With the high number of lone parent families in Kwinana, programs are required to address the increased levels of disadvantage and social isolation confronting these families.

Education levels are low in Kwinana, at the same time economic and industrial restructuring has resulted in the requirement for higher education and training levels in many industries. There is the need to increase access to education and training opportunities to uplift the skill and knowledge base of Kwinana and also a need to improve local employment opportunities and local economic development.

The high unemployment rate and low incomes in Kwinana suggest that poverty is likely to be an ongoing issue, together with the associated issues of poorer health and education levels, social isolation and decline in quality of life. Material and financial aid and life skills programs are essential, together with a greater focus on community health and education programs

Community Facility Audit

The assessment of community facilities undertaken concluded that much of the City of Kwinana's existing community facilities are ageing and in a poor state of repair. Most of the infrastructure was put into place in the early stages of development of the town and no longer meets community need or expectations and the demand for the provision of contemporary infrastructure is rapidly growing in older areas.

While community and cultural facilities built more recently, such as the Kwinana Community Arts Centre and Frank Konecny Community Centre were found to be in better condition, both were showing signs of 'wear and tear' and are dated. The substantial upgrade required to existing facilities, with the increasing demand for new facilities was identified as a significant challenge the City of Kwinana will need to address.

Community Needs and Priorities

The Community Infrastructure Study identified the following community services and facility priorities for the City of Kwinana.

Community and Cultural Facilities

- Youth Activity Centre
- New Library
- Lotteries House
- Community arts village
- Artists incubator/studio space
- Gallery space
- Music and video studio

Children, Young People and Families

- Child care
- Respite care
- Early intervention family support
- Youth crisis accommodation

Community and Cultural Development

- Increase local events, passive and cultural events
- Develop community spirit and capacity
- Volunteer development
- Early planning and provision in new housing estates
- Basic life skills development
- Art school

Seniors

- Public and community transport
- Capacity of seniors to be independent
- Recreation and leisure opportunities
- Traffic and public infrastructure – footpaths, bus shelters, seating, lighting

Community and Public Health

- Improved infant health service
- Expand community health programs - Men's health and drugs/ alcohol
- Health education

Mental Health Services

- Shortage of community support services
- Under resourced and huge waiting lists
- Lack of emergency after hours services
- Drug and alcohol counselling service

Material and Financial Support

- Material aid shortages - food parcels, financial aid, furniture/household goods
- Community food kitchens
- Poverty programs

Public Infrastructure

- Landscaping parks
- Improving footpaths and lighting
- Enhancing public spaces

Transport and Access

- Poor footpaths and cycleways
- Poor public transport services
- Inadequate inter suburb and regional linkages
- Community transport-seniors, young people, families, people with disabilities
- Lack of access to regional services and government services

Essential Services

- Improve Ambulance service
- Expand police service
- Returning and retaining government offices in Kwinana

Consultation with both service and facility providers identified a lack of office space, meeting, seminar and workshop facilities and counselling rooms and developing some type 'Lotteries House' facility has identified as high priority by the Community Infrastructure Study.

With the size of the library 334 square metres short in meeting the current needs of the community the Community Infrastructure Study identified the development of a new library within the town centre as a high priority.

The Community Infrastructure Study also identify the need to consider a 'regional level' community centre within the future redevelopment of the town centre, as well as incorporating the new library in this development.

While a redevelopment of the Kwinana Community Arts Centre (now Koorliny Arts Centre) was not considered a priority it was noted that the need to expand this facility would occur with the anticipated growth of the population.

3 Community Resource and Knowledge Centre Feasibility Study

This study involved a detailed assessment of the need for a new public library, regional community centre and office space for community service organisations. Extensive community consultation occurred throughout the study which involved over 500 local residents, including children, young people, families, seniors and Indigenous residents.

All relevant government and non-government agency were also actively involved in identifying the need and components required. The study also involved a literature review, demographic analysis, community facility audit and an overview of the resulting needs assessment is provided below.

Public Library and Information

The study highlighted that the Kwinana Library is one of the most well used libraries in Western Australia, with almost half of the population of Kwinana having library membership. However, the study also concluded that the floor area and facilities within the library were well below acceptable standards.

The major physical limitations identified with the current library related to space, layout and stock. With regard to space the study found that the library did not meet the minimum guidelines for library space, falling short by 248 square metres to service the population of that time.

Resource and Community Centre

The study also concluded that Kwinana is one of the most disadvantaged communities in Western Australia and this was confirmed by the 2007 Catholic and Jesuit Social Services Report Dropping off the Edge - the distribution of disadvantage in Australia.

The study identified that if the entrenched social disadvantage being experienced by many Kwinana residents is going to change, then a wide range of community support services need to be provided locally. In order to do this, appropriate infrastructure needs to be provided from which a range of direct service and capacity building activities can operate.

For their part, religious and charitable not-for-profit agencies have long recognised the compelling need for real support for sections of the Kwinana community. However, there has also long been a shortage of premises to accommodate these agencies and their operations.

In addition, there is an acute shortage of community facilities and spaces and with education and employment levels significantly lower than state averages, training facilities are also an identified need in the area.

This highlights the importance of the community facilities, services and programs a Community Resource and Knowledge Centre can provide, incorporating a 'one stop' shop for services, activities and resources.

At the 'Kwinana at the Crossroads' conference hosted by the City of Kwinana in 2006, community members were asked to review the level and standard of community service provision in five key areas, identify gaps and make recommendations for improvements and the following gaps were some identified.

- Lack of facilities and resources for 8-12 year olds and young people
- Need for more information about services and programs
- Lack of communication between schools and services
- Child and mental health services only available in Rockingham and Fremantle
- Inappropriate and shortage of office space
- No community centre facilities or programming
- Ageing community infrastructure
- Lack of transport and no local services

The provision of a community resource and community centre and library and information centre was also recommended by government and non-government service providers in the 2006/2007 'Community Action Plan' report developed by the City of Kwinana.

The 'Community Action Plan' identified similar gaps in service provision in the City of Kwinana, such as drug and alcohol, outreach and crisis services, child and adolescent mental health services and office space for health provision and agencies. A key recommendation of this report was for the provision of adequate and appropriate space and facilities for agencies that are centrally located, accessible and co-located.

The Community Resource and Knowledge Centre Feasibility Study confirmed this and provided solid evidence to support the many anecdotal reports of a real shortage of suitable community purpose accommodation in the City of Kwinana. Thirteen organisations expressed an interest in being accommodated in the building, indicating an initial demand for 1,200 square metres of leasable space, excluding common areas.

Having established a clear need, feasibility and business case, the City of Kwinana progressed this project and the Community Resource and Knowledge Centre has now been built. The centre will serve the current and future population and it is envisaged that the Town Square and Community Resource and Knowledge Centre will work in harmony with each other. Key benefits of the facility will include:

- Increased communication, liaison and planning between service providers.
- Increased opportunity for residents to access support in a coordinated manner.
- Improved learning outcomes for young people and the general community and associated improved outcomes accessing training and employment opportunities.

- A place that people can go to knowing that they will be safe, and engage in a wide variety of recreation, leisure and informal social activities.
- A place where people can engage in life long learning opportunities and expand their horizons.
- A place to build social capital, community capacity and community networks, and develop a sense of community.

4 Kwinana Youth Facility Feasibility Study

This study involved a detailed assessment of the feasibility and need for a youth facility in the City of Kwinana and was conducted with extensive community consultation. Over 180 young people and children, as well as many relevant government and non-government agencies were involved.

The Kwinana Youth Facility Feasibility Study also involved a review of previous reports, a demographic analysis and an audit of the current services, programs and facilities available for young people. An overview of the resulting needs assessment is provided below.

- Service provision for young people in the City of Kwinana area is fragmented and inadequate, with young people having to face numerous challenges in order to access appropriate services.
- Many of the urgently required youth agencies such as drug and alcohol counselling and support, mental health care and supported accommodation services are based in Rockingham or Fremantle and are therefore not meeting the needs of young people in the City of Kwinana. This also proves difficult when trying to establish clear case plans and facilitate communication between agencies.
- The 'Kwinana Youth Needs Search Conference' held in 1985 first recognised a number of significant issues for young people and the lack of facilities for unstructured, non-sporting recreational opportunities for young people. While improvements to services and facilities have occurred since this time, the size of the youth population has increased considerably and as the demographic analysis revealed, the population of young people is set to grow significantly, as new residential development occurs.
- The gaps in services and facilities for young people and the lack of recreational opportunities have also been demonstrated in a number of reports.
 - Report on Young People's Needs/Services in the Kwinana Region
 - Youth Services Planning Workshop and Budget Report
 - Kwinana Recreation and Leisure Centre CSRFF Feasibility Study
 - It's About Time and It's About Space: A Youth Centre for the Town of Kwinana
 - Town of Kwinana Youth Activity Centre: Development of Project Specifications
- In the Kwinana Recreation and Leisure Centre Feasibility Study community members expressed strong support for a youth centre in the City of Kwinana. This study involved the distribution of questionnaires to randomly selected households consisting of questions relevant to community needs. Respondents to the questionnaire rated a youth centre as the "...second most needed social or recreation facility for Kwinana." The study also suggested that "...office space and a purpose built youth facility (with external entry) be a major consideration in any proposed redevelopment plan of the recreation centre."

- The 'Kwinana at the Crossroads conference' held in 2006 also identified the lack of facilities and resources for children and young people and a lack of office space for services as an important issues and the fact that child and mental health services are only available in Rockingham and Fremantle was a particular concern. The provision of a youth space, the promotion of a more positive image of young people and the need to increase service coordination and integration were key recommendations of the conference.
- Service statistics clearly demonstrate two prominent issues, firstly disengagement with formal education, employment, or training and secondly, the need for increased positive social interaction. Over the past twelve months up to 80% of young people referred, requested recreational and social activities, as well as appropriate mentoring and role modelling.
- These issues are consistently being observed by professionals within the education system, with a large number of children and young people considered to be educationally 'at risk' due to behavioural, social, emotional or family factors. Department of Education and Training unpublished data on suspension and exclusion from school for behaviour difficulties, critical incidents, such as school related violence and the retention levels into post-compulsory schooling all indicate the City of Kwinana is a high need area for improving services, programs and facilities for children and young people.
- To work effectively with young people, it is becoming increasingly evident that young people best connect with services at a space that is safe, secure and youth friendly. Often when young people are 'socialising' with peers, they do not feel comfortable disclosing to youth workers.
- It is therefore more appropriate to provide a forum for social, recreational and informal interaction between support services and young people in order to facilitate change. This is where the need for a youth facility that incorporates intensive case management, early intervention, co-location and informal mentoring and support is important.
- The principle of intervening earlier rather than later in the lives of young people is the key to engaging with them to prevent them from 'slipping through the cracks', increasing the likelihood of them becoming functional members of society.
- The need and desire for a specific youth facility with co-located services has been long awaited in Kwinana. Numerous reports stated above discuss very similar themes such as growing populations and lower socio-economic issues, the fragmented state of current service provision to young people in Kwinana and the pro-longed desire/need for a youth space in the community.

With a well established need, feasibility and business case, the City of Kwinana as proceeded with the development of a regional level Youth Centre be located adjacent to the Requatic and this has now been completed. The Youth Centre provides a purpose built centre incorporating multi-purpose activity/meeting rooms, recreation/leisure spaces and education/training facilities. It is a key focal point for young people to access a range of support services and activities, individual/group counselling, local information, and education/training opportunities.

Having services under one roof is particularly important for young people who are dealing with multiple issues involving multiple agencies. Equally vital is the increased communication amongst service providers, resulting in greater levels of collaboration and dialogue between the various services, thus facilitating new ways of working together and service delivery that maximizes benefits to young people. The key benefits of the Youth Centre are summarised below:

- Increased communication, liaison and planning between youth service providers.
- Increased opportunity for young people to access support in a coordinated manner.
- Improved learning outcomes for young people and associated improved outcomes accessing training and employment opportunities.
- Improved relationships and co-operation between service providers and young people.
- A safe and culturally appropriate space for young people to engage with peers and service providers.
- Additional office space to attract sessional youth workers into Kwinana.
- A space that young people can go to knowing that they will be safe, and engage in recreation, leisure and informal social activities.
- A place where young people feel a sense of ownership and where the community can see the positive aspects of youth culture.
- A place to build social capital and community networks.

5 Community Infrastructure Study - Jandakot Structure Plan

The City of Kwinana, over a number of years prepared its Draft District Structure Plan (Eastern Residential Intensification Concept 'ERIC'), which provides a further refinement to achieving urbanisation within the City of Kwinana, east and west of the Kwinana Freeway. ERIC has been derived from the Jandakot Structure Plan, which as a broader District Structure Plan provides a framework for future land use and development either side of the Kwinana Freeway.

In developing this Structure Plan, a Community Infrastructure Study was undertaken to identify the types of community facilities likely to be needed, location criteria and approximate land requirement for each of the facilities. The study not only included local government community facilities, but also state government and private sector facilities, thereby encompassing the wide range of community infrastructure likely to be required by the 45,000 people anticipated to live in the structure plan area.

While the need for community facilities is largely influenced by the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of an area, where a community is yet to be established the use of planning standards is essential to determine 'indicative' requirements to ensure the necessary land area is set aside for community purposes in the right locations in relation to other land uses in the early planning stages.

The Community Infrastructure Study involved the development of a comprehensive set of Community Planning Standards with wide consultation with government agencies and the private sector. By profiling the likely age structure and applying these Community Planning Standards, indicative requirements for the following community facilities were identified.

- Schools and tertiary education
- Child care centres
- Youth centres
- Community centres
- Libraries
- Emergency and supported accommodation
- Hospitals
- Community health centres
- Child health centres
- Residential aged care
- Home and community care
- Parks
- Sports grounds
- Recreation and aquatic centres
- Cultural facilities and venues
- Police stations
- Ambulance stations

6 Public Open Space Upgrade Strategy

The Public Open Space Upgrade Strategy was prepared in 2013 and is the next step in formalising a Local Parks and Playground Strategy based upon the recommendations from the Kwinana Parks Project Final Report, July 2008 and the Draft Parks and Playground Strategy 2009-2012. The Public Open Space Upgrade Strategy is a strategic approach to the upgrade of existing parks and aims to:

- Draw on current research to make an informed strategy on the design and standard of public open space.
- Align with the standards set by the City of Kwinana Public Open Space & Streetscape Development Guidelines 2013, which are currently being developed.
- Establish the current standard of existing parks and changes required to bring them to the set standard.

The strategy draws on new research and establishes a new classification for public open space, a design approach, guidelines for provision and amenities and a process for determining the priorities for public open space improvements. The following key findings from the research and needs assessment process are outlined below.

Importance of Play

Parks and open space play an integral role in the development of children and through play children learn important social skills, rules and etiquette, coordination and motor skills, problem solving and decision making. Providing play spaces that are inclusive and varied stimulate the imagination, encourage creativity and exploration and enhance children's learning outcomes.

Research supports this and demonstrates the importance of play environments, with almost ¼ of Australian children overweight or obese. One particular study has shown that children between the ages of 3-13 years are spending an astounding 27% of their time watching television, compared to only 1% outdoors.

However, play is not just for children and it is just as important that teenagers and adults and parks and public open spaces provide the perfect opportunity for social interaction, physical activity, social inclusion and community engagement that are essential for a healthy and connected community.

In order to provide exciting play opportunities for children and adults, parks and open space need to provide opportunities for inclusion across all abilities and age levels, be inviting and safe environments and encourage interaction with nature, animals and pets.

Nature and Play

Further to this, more and more studies are showing the importance green spaces are having with mental health benefits, as well as the importance interaction with nature in the development of children. Research is indicating that playing in a natural environment:

- Stimulates the immune system resulting in being sick less often
- Increases physical activity levels and lowers likelihood of being overweight
- Improves language and collaborations skills
- Reduces Attention Deficit Disorder
- Reduces bullying behaviour.

While 14% of children are diagnosed with a mental health disorder and 11% with ADHD, research is demonstrating that contact with nature can have huge mental health benefits and that contact with nature decreases stress, decreases anger and improves attention. It has also been shown that adults who went walking in a natural environment had lower blood pressure than those who went walking in an urban setting. Not only does nature have a positive effect on mental health but studies have also shown that playing in natural setting, versus urban landscapes improve children's development of motor skills, coordination, balance and social skills.

With increasing urbanisation, parks will increasingly become some children's only chance to come into contact with nature and it is therefore important that 'nature focused' parks exist throughout the parks and public open space system. This means that traditional lines between structured playground and the surrounding nature need to be blurred. Children should be encouraged to get dirty, play with sticks and sand and parents need to let them.

Inclusion and Access to Public Open Space

Play spaces should provide a diverse range of interactive, creative and physical challenges and encourage play across all age brackets, integrated play between age groups, people with disabilities and people from various cultures.

Parks should be linked to the neighbourhood via perimeter pathways that link all internal facilities and must comply with the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan, as well as legislation, by providing access to the play space and interaction with some elements within the play space. Although not all areas will necessarily be accessible by all levels of abilities, this will allow children of all ages and abilities to interact within the same space and feel included in play.

Open grassed areas or "kick about space" provide the opportunity for activities to develop spontaneously. They are important areas that must be considered which allow for meeting, socialising and informal ball games. Informal play areas also provide important opportunities for imaginative and creative play. These areas should include natural areas containing creative elements for play and stimulating activities. These elements could include water, sand, rocks, pebbles, grass, bark, logs, mounds, shrubs and trees.

Pets in Parks

Pet friendly parks should be accessible to all residents to encourage positive interactions with their pets and community, social interaction and active recreation. Pet friendly parks include designated dog exercise areas but are not limited to these spaces and should include the following features:

- Dog litter bags and bins
- Pathways
- Signage encouraging responsible pet ownership.
- Dog agility equipment
- Water fountains for both pets and owners

With seven approved dog exercise parks across Kwinana, to improve accessibility and encourage a responsible pet ownership community it is recommended that there is at least one dog exercise area in each suburb.

With the completion of the Public Open Space Upgrade Strategy, this has informed the standards and hierarchy developed for the Community Infrastructure Plan and the framework for providing passive and active public open space.

7 Parks and Playground Strategy

In 2008, a Parks and Playground Strategy was prepared based on a comprehensive review of public open space, parks and the facilities and equipment available. The review involved consultation with user groups, community groups and a survey to gauge resident's perceptions about the current standard of parks and facilities and priorities for improvements.

Key principles for public open space planning were also identified and a five year action plan was prepared which identified the priorities for improvements and development of parks and public open space. An overview of the needs and issues identified by the strategy are outlined below.

- Local Parks are one of the most basic provisions of social open space that the City of Kwinana can make and are the simple, but important connectors of many communities. In some places, they are the only open space available to local residents without access to cars.
- Local Parks provide the most common leisure opportunities for local residents. Leisure may be in play or informal games, exercise, social interaction, or quiet reflection. Local Parks often support a range of age groups so leisure opportunities should be available for a variety of ages that is appropriate to the community profile of the local area. Where this cannot be provided on one local park an adjacent park should provide appropriate alternative opportunities.
- Local parks are a major contributor to play and creative opportunities for local children. Play is not limited to the equipment provided but will also be encouraged by the provision of grassed surfaces, interesting landform and natural elements and the retention of trees in the park.
- Amenity should be available through tree planting and seats. In some parks shade will be provided by trees and, in some, by shelters.
- As the age profile of the local area changes this range of leisure opportunities provided by local parks may also change to serve the local residents.
- The conservation of special areas raises the issue of the competition between conservation and sport and recreation in public open space. On one side there is an increasing concern for the environment from individuals or groups seeking to protect and conserve natural areas. On the other side there is an increasing number seeking to utilise or develop natural areas for a range of activities.

- Whilst the City seeks to establish a balance between conservation and use, it is acknowledged that in some instances these different objectives cannot be reconciled, for example trail bike riding in sensitive bushland areas. This issue highlights the need for appropriate classification and management of spaces.
- There are also competing uses among recreational and sporting activities that can be difficult to resolve. For example, a number of different sports codes or clubs wanting to use a reserve simultaneously, which can result in overuse, impacts on ground condition and amenity or exclusion of some groups. There may also be competing uses relating to different functions of a space that may conflict with each other, such as quiet reflection, dog exercise and organised sport.
- This issue must be addressed on a number of levels, firstly through ensuring the adequate provision of public open space — both in total area and in different types of opportunities to meet a range of diverse community needs. Secondly, this issue can be addressed through the design of open spaces, through a planned approach to public open space zones and location and siting of facilities. Given that uses can change over time as a result of emerging community needs, trends, issues and demographics, the need to design spaces for flexibility and variety of use is important (multi-use spaces), although there also needs to be due consideration and understanding of the key needs of a range of users. For example, the dimensions of playing fields for different sports are relatively fixed to meet training and match play requirements.
- Public Open Space also serves different catchments of the population. An increase in the catchments may correlate to an increase in environmental significance, in the size of the site or the quality of the development on the site. Overuse and damage often occurs when a site with a local level of size or development standard attracts a district or regional catchment.