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1 SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT GUIDELINE

This guideline provides additional information on social impact assessments, which may be required to support a development application in accordance with Council's current Development Control Plan (DCP).

1.1 SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Social Impact Assessment focuses on the human dimension of environments. It seeks to address the question "what will be the impact of a project/development on people?" and to anticipate outcomes that may flow from a proposed development which are likely to affect people's way of life, their culture and/or their community. Social Impact Assessment is not a tool to stop development, but is to assist in the assessment of development proposals so that the best development results.

These provisions should be considered in conjunction with Council's *Social Plan*, 2009 - 2014.

Council has a statutory obligation under the provisions of Section 79C of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act* 1979 to consider the social impact of a proposal when assessing a specific development application.

1.2 PURPOSE OF SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The purpose of the Social Impact Assessment is to:

1. Assist in establishing the full facts about the development, to support a well-informed decision about the appropriateness of the development proposal,

2. Minimise adverse impacts and maximise beneficial impacts of the development,

3. Assess the impacts of the development on future generations,

4. Inform the community and facilitate participation by the community in the planning and development assessment process,

5. Facilitate the consideration of alternative development proposals, and

6. Enhance existing data to inform the planning and development assessment process.

1.3 WHEN IS A SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REQUIRED?

A social impact assessment is required to be prepared in accordance with these guidelines where the proposed development:

1. Is identified in Table 1; or

2. Is valued at $5,000,000 or greater; or

3. Has a floor area greater than 3,000m²; or

4. Where Council identifies that the particular circumstances warrant it, such as

   • The development is targeted at a particular socio-economic or demographic group,

   • The development is considered in conflict with it's locality, and

   • The development has, or is anticipated to generate, significant levels of community opposition

Note: The scope, complexity and requirements of the SIA will be commensurate with the scale of the proposed development. Applicants are advised to consult with Council's Social Planner regarding specific requirements.

Table 1 - Development requiring a Social Impact Assessment

Affordable Housing (new/loss of/intensification, Boarding house, hostel)	Markets
Amusement Centres	Medical Centre
Animal Training and Boarding Establishments	Mixed use development (residential and commercial)
Backpackers' accommodation	Mortuary
Boarding House	Multi-dwelling housing (developments of more than 20 dwellings)
Brothels/sex service premises	Nightclub
Child Care Centre	Offensive and/or hazardous industry
Community Facility	Passenger Transport Terminals
Crematorium	Place of Public Entertainment
Education Establishment	Place of Public Worship
Entertainment Facility	Port uses / port facilities
Freight Transport Facility	Pub
Function Centre	Public Transport Facilities
Funeral Chapel / Funeral Home	Recreation areas
Group Home	Recreation Facilities
Health Consulting Rooms	Registered Club
Health Services Facilities	Residential Care Facility
Helipad / Heliport	Restricted Premises
Home Occupation (Sex Services)	School
Hospital	Seniors Housing
Hotel or motel accommodation	Service Stations
Information and Education Facility	Sewage Treatment Plants
Licensed Premises (Hotels, Taverns and Bottle Shops)	Subdivision (Major – more than 50 lots)
Major roads, arterial or transport corridors	Waste Facilities
Marinas	Water System / Facilities

1.4   WHAT ISSUES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT?

All issues that affect people, directly or indirectly, are pertinent to social impact assessment. Social impacts include changes to one or more of the following:

- People's way of life – that is, how they live work, play and interact with one another on a day-to-day basis;

- Their culture – that is, their shared beliefs, customs, values, language or dialect;

- Their community – its cohesion, stability, character, services and facilities;

- Their political systems – the extent to which people are able to participate in decisions taht affect their lives, the level of democratisation that is taking place, and the resources provided for this purpose;

- Their environment – the quality of the air and water people use; the availability and quality of the food they eat; the level of hazard or risk; dust and noise they are exposed to; the adequacy of sanitation; their physical safety, and their access to and control over resources;

- Their health and wellbeing – health is a state of complete physical, mental, social and spiritual wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity;

- Their personal and property rights – particularly whether people are economically affected, ore experience personal disadvantage which may include a violation of their civil liberties; and

- Their fears and aspirations – their perceptions about their safety, their fears about the future of their community, and their aspirations for their future and the future of their children.

1.5   THE LAKE MACQUARIE SOCIAL PLAN 2009 - 2014

In accordance with the Department of Local Government's Integrated Planning Guidelines, a Social Plan has been developed for the City of Lake Macquarie. This Plan is a strategic document that identifies the key trends and issues affecting all people that live and work in the area. It addresses the most significant social issues, and contains action plans that provide details of the priority issues, strategies to address each of these issues, and the proposed timeframe for implementation of these strategies.

The plan focuses on the areas of:

- Housing;

- Health;

- Education, employment and child care;

- Transport;

- Community safety;

- Leisure, recreation and culture; and

- Urban development and the built environment.

1.6   WHAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN A SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

There is no set methodology for Social Impact Assessment due to the range and complexity of issues that may need to be addressed. In this regard the adopted methodology should be tailored to the issues related to the project in question. Notwithstanding this, the Checklist for issues to be generally considered in a Social Impact Assessment are outlined below.

Applicants are advised to consult with Council's Social Planner to discuss any particular requirements relevant to the proposal.

Table 2 - Social Impact Assessment Checklist

Checklist: Social Impact Assessment
A Social Impact Assessment should include: - A community social profile - Information on social condition and impacts, and reference to relevant research (particularly any comparative examples). Examples of issues to consider are contained in Table 3. - The identification of the scope of the assessment (otherwise known as scoping),

Checklist: Social Impact Assessment

- Determine the likely impacts of the development proposal including considering:
  - Changes which would occur if the development were to proceed,
  - Who is likely to be affected by the development and in what way,
  - Community impacts likely to occur during the construction and operation phases of the development,
  - How long the impacts are likely to last,
  - Any positive or negative impacts, and
  - Any cumulative impacts.

- Consideration of the significance of community impacts should include:
  - The number of people likely to be affected,
  - Principles of social justice (equity, access, fairness, inter-generational impacts),
  - The extent to which the interests of the community as a whole are enhanced or sustained,
  - The degree of change likely to arise as a result of the development relative to the existing circumstances,
  - The level of controversy anticipated, and
  - Whether or not the impacts would represent a good planning outcome.

- Assess the likely Impact of the development proposal including considering:
  - The level of importance of the predicted impacts,
  - Measures to help avoid or minimise the negative impacts, and
  - Measures to promote the positive impacts of the development.

- An examination of alternatives, including a "no development" scenario

- Consultation – consultation is a safeguard and a source of information and ideas. It is a non-negotiable inclusion in a SIA. Consultation should occur with:

  - The community;
  - Stakeholders;
  - Experts;

- Recommendations

  - Does the proposal have overall benefits or costs?
  - If the proposal is to proceed, what are some responses or conditions that should be implemented to help mitigate or avoid any social impacts, and to enhance the social benefits

1.7   INFORMATION ON SOCIAL CONDITION

The table below contains a guide on issues to be generally considered in analysing existing social condition and predicted impacts from the development.

Applicants are advised to consult with Council's Social Planner to discuss any particular requirements relevant to the proposal.

Table 3 -   **Social Conditions**

Social Condition	
Accessibility	• Existing patterns of access and mobility • Vehicular, pedestrian and bike movements • Public transport • Private vehicle ownership
Demographic Change	• Age distribution • Ethnicity • Nature of households and families • Income and employment • Growth forecasts
Community Issues	• Amenity • Cohesiveness of the community • Crime and safety • Places of local significance/local landmarks • Aspects of sense of place • Level of activity by community organisations • Cultural/social patterns and networks • Health statistics • Levels of pollution (air, noise, water)
Community Services and Facilities	• Availability and capacity of existing services/ facilities, such as halls, churches, libraries, community centres, recreation facilities, education places and health services, among others.
Indigenous Heritage and Issues	• Important places • Cultural characteristics, events and practices • Cultural values
Development Trends	• Nature of development • Location • Cumulative affects of this type of development • Past development activity and trends
Economic Trends	• Employment/un-employment (current status and trends) • Nature and location of employment • Nature of skills/level of education • Income • Local business development (current status and trends)
Housing	• Housing supply • Housing type • Tenure of housing (ownership/rental/ private/public) • Cost of housing (purchasing and rental) • Housing to meet particular community, such as, boarding houses, emergency housing, housing for older people.
Groups with Particular Needs	• Availability/capacity of services required to support the needs of people with particular needs, such as older people, people with disabilities, non-English speaking people, workers, youth, women, residents and visitors.

1.8   EXAMPLES AND ADDRESSING SOCIAL IMPACTS MATTERS

Some examples of how social impacts may be addressed are outlined below.

Table 4 -   **Addressing Social Impacts**

Social Issue	Social Issue Meaning	How Social Issue Addressed
Cultural and community well being	Refers to quality of life for individuals and communities, where people are satisfied with their living standards and relationships with others in their community. Well-being includes factors such as a healthy life, shelter and security of housing, access to cultural and leisure activities and a satisfactory physical environment.	• Building design responds to the social context and needs of the local community in terms of lifestyle, affordability and access to social facilities, • Building design that is consistent with the character of the local area, • Management of environmental impacts of business, particularly where these could have an ongoing impact on people's health, • Provision of public spaces for the community to come together, such as parks, playgrounds and community facilities.
Social equity	Fairly distributing and improving access to resources such as facilities, housing and employment, and providing for a range of lifestyle opportunities for all members of the community.	• Provision of affordable housing, • Relocation of an existing service or facility affected by the proposed development (where this improves or maintains access and service delivery opportunities).
Cohesiveness of the community	May be thought of as the 'glue' that binds communities together. It has been described as people working towards a common goal or vision. Social cohesion happens when diversity is recognised, where there is minimal conflict and where relationships (between state agencies and people) are co-operative.	• Provision of public spaces for the community to come together, such as parks, playgrounds and community facilities, • Involvement of local residents in decision making.
Sense of place	A sense of identity in a locality that defines it from other areas. Can also involve feelings of belonging by the people who live there through familiarity, ownership and pride in the area.	• Consultation with local residents and businesses to understand what people value about a locality and development which enhances or reflects these values, • Incorporation of local symbols and images into building design and finish, including signage, • Recognition of local landmarks, cultural events and identity and the connections they provide to the local community, • Building design that is consistent with the character and context of the local area.

Social Issue	Social Issue Meaning	How Social Issue Addressed
Inter-generational impact	Considering the effects of the development on present and future generations.	• Implementation of sustainable development principles, such as the use of solar power and recycled materials, • Flexible building design that can be adapted to accommodate changing demographics of an area or community.