

SOCIAL ISSUES

PAPERS



Foreword

We are pleased to present the Bega Valley Shire Council's Social Issues Paper 2012. This follows on from Council's previous Social Plans covering the periods 2000-2005 and 2006-2011.

The introduction of the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework (IPRF) as the key planning process for local government to identify a range of issues, including social and community, has seen a move away from the mandated social planning framework that has underpinned previous social plans. However, there has been a strong push for a process that identifies those community issues, previously reflected in the social plan, which will act to inform both the community and Council.

There are a number of Social Issues Papers contained within this document which address a range of issues affecting our community today. The Social Issues Paper is written as a dynamic document and as significant changes occur for particular target groups or issues they will be updated or revisited. The target groups covered are not an exhaustive list and as community issues are highlighted consideration will be given to developing additional Social Issues Papers.

A number of issues from the previous social plans reappear in this Social Issues Paper reflecting the complex and long term nature of many social and community issues affecting our Shire. Often Council is only one of many stakeholders involved in addressing social issues and the challenge ahead is to work with others to achieve maximum benefits for our community.

Council is currently working on a range of strategies, long, medium and short term, to address some of the issues highlighted in this document. Details are outlined in Council's annual Operational Plan, Delivery Plan (2011-2016) and longer term Community Strategic Plan. These documents are available on Council's website.

This plan could not have been developed without significant contribution from a range of people. We wish to thank all of those who participated in community and other consultations, community members, government and non government representatives who gave feedback on issues.



Cr Bill Taylor
Mayor



Peter Tegart
General Manager



Social Issues Papers

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RECOGNISING OUR ABORIGINAL CUSTODIANS

The Bega Valley Shire acknowledges, by way of our Memorandum of Understanding with the Bega, Eden and Merriman's Local Aboriginal Lands Councils and the Native Title Holders, that Aboriginal people are the original inhabitants, custodians and native titleholders of all lands and waters in the Shire. We recognise Aboriginal spiritual, social and cultural connections to these lands and waters and state our commitment to ensuring that Aboriginal rights, as enshrined in legislation, are upheld and not eroded.

COUNCIL'S VISION

The Bega Valley will be a community that works together to achieve a balance between quality of life, sustainable development and conservation of the environment.

“All the things that Council has traditionally been responsible for - our roads, building, waste and water services - are important things, but they are a means to an end, it is the people that we are most concerned with.”

Cr Bill Taylor
Mayor
October 2012

Acknowledgements

This Social Issues Paper has been prepared by Council, with feedback and contributions from numerous organisations and individuals across the Bega Valley.

The majority of the photos within the papers were taken by Tonia Liosatos at a range of community events with permission from community members. We would like to thank and acknowledge the other people and organisations that supplied photos including Stuart Cameron, Local Aboriginal Lands Councils and Tulgeen Disability Services. We acknowledge that these wonderful photos of local people add value to the Social Issues Papers.

The Social Issues Paper is available via the Council website, as an entire document or by individual section: www.begavalley.nsw.gov.au

Hard copies are available on request.

For inquiries please contact Council on 6499 2222

Disclaimer: The photos that appear in these Social Issues Papers show a range of people participating in positive ways in our community. The people that have consented to having their photo included are not connected to the social issues defined in these papers.

Executive Summary

The Bega Valley Shire is a rural area on the far south coast of NSW and borders the State of Victoria at its southern boundary. The Shire covers a large geographic area of 6052 square kilometres and has a population of 31 950 (ABS 2011)¹, living in three large towns as well as a number of villages and smaller rural communities. Major industries are agriculture, fishing, oyster harvesting, forestry, retail and tourism. The Shire's population has grown steadily over the past few decades, particularly in the towns and villages (Profile ID)²

The median weekly income is \$848, which is lower than the Regional NSW average of \$961, 23% of the population are couples with children and 14% of the population are older people with no children.

In comparison with the NSW average the Bega Valley has a relatively higher population of older people. There are relatively low numbers of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds but a relatively large Aboriginal population.

The Bega Valley Shire is a regional community made up of a number of communities, each with their own needs, issues and priorities. Given the way that the population is scattered over a very large area it is not surprising that transport was consistently raised as a significant issue. This is also a contributing factor to the issues facing young people in the Bega Valley, which was the other most consistently expressed need. Significant social issues to be addressed include offering young people a diverse range of activities after high school. Another social issue for the Shire as a whole is the changing proportion of older people in the community. There is an increasing trend for people from the cities to retire to coastal and rural areas such as those in the Bega Valley Shire. The implications of this are wide spread particularly in the provision and planning of infrastructure and services for older people into the future.

THE AIM OF THE SOCIAL ISSUES PAPER

The aim of this Social Issues Paper is to identify key social issues affecting our community. It is not designed to be an in depth study of each issue or target group, rather an overview of those issues that will highlight particular areas of concern or need in the Shire. It aims to:

- Develop an understanding of the needs of communities, including disadvantaged groups.
- Identify opportunities to respond to community needs, and in partnership with others.
- Identify services, facilities and processes required to address priority community needs.
- Advocate for additional or expanded resources to meet community needs.

Each section of the Social Issues Paper provides reference to background documents and, where applicable, further reading on the specific issue.

This will be a dynamic document and as developments arise affecting the community sector. These issues papers may be updated and/or redeveloped. As it is not possible for this Social Issues Paper to address every social or community issue, the target groups chosen were reflective of the mandated target groups under the previous state social planning framework

1. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011 Census, www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2011/quickstat/LGA10550?opendocument&navpos=220
2. Profile ID, Community Profile, <http://profile.id.com.au/bega-valley/population-estimate>

and should be seen as a starting point, the target groups identified here are not an exhaustive list, neither are the issues covered in the Social Issues Paper.

The document will work in two key ways, as an informing document to guide Councillors decision making in the review of the Community Strategic Plan, and four year delivery plan, as it relates to community and social issues. It will also be an important resource for the community and those organisations working across the Shire to address the issues identified, it is hoped that this will be a document that can be used to support funding applications as was the case with previous social plans.

The development of the Social Issues Papers has involved targeted community consultation through a number of different processes and incorporates some of the consultation Council conducted as part of its Community Strategic Planning process. The participation of a range of stakeholders, including children and community members has been critical in its development.

Other methods used to identify and prioritise social needs have included surveys, consultations, literature reviews of research and publications, information from demographic and other available data and the assessment of the outcomes from the last social plan. As it is not possible for the Social Issues Paper to address every social or cultural issue raised it has been necessary to identify priority areas.

To enable the information from all the consultations to be effectively used it needs to be analysed in relation to how consistently the issues were raised across the Shire, the extent to which the needs are supported by demographic or other evidence and the representativeness of the sample of the community that was consulted.

This Social Issues Paper addresses both general community social issues and

particular target groups within the community. The broad community issues of affordable housing, transport, health/wellbeing and learning/education, were identified and are covered in the community wellbeing paper.

METHODOLOGY

The methods used to identify social needs in the Bega Valley Shire were based on both qualitative and quantitative information. Consultation with the community has been a continuous process throughout the life of the previous social plan. Council staff also participated in networks and forums designed to address issues affecting specific target groups within our community and have used information gained from these forums.

The methods used to collect information and analyse social needs included;

- Community consultations held in Bega in March 2012 with service providers who work with the targeted populations in the Social Issues Papers.
- Feedback from online surveys in March 2012. (Bega Valley Views 2030, an online community engagement tool).
- The evaluation of the 2000-2005 and 2006-2012 social plans
- Review of existing research and reports available on social, community and cultural issues relevant to the Bega Valley Shire
- Demographic, statistical and research information

SOCIAL JUSTICE PRINCIPLES

The development of this Social Issues Paper has been underpinned by a set of principles which provide a social justice framework for developing inclusive communities. The Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework requires that Council apply the following social justice principles when undertaking its consultation and developing its plans:

1. Equity – involving fairness in decision making, prioritising and allocation of resources, particularly for those in need.
2. Access – having fair access to services, resources and opportunities to improve quality of life.
3. Participation – the maximum opportunity to genuinely participate in decisions which affect their lives.
4. Rights – equal rights established and promoted, with opportunities provided for people from diverse linguistic, cultural and religious backgrounds to participate in community life.

Council has committed to these principles in the development of the plans and strategies in the adopted Integrated Planning and Reporting framework. Council has also applied a quadruple bottom line matrix to gauge the impacts of all key actions on the social, economic, environmental and civic leadership fabric of the area.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

2011 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) census data and other statistical information has been used to gain a better understanding of our population, how it is likely to change and the socio economic and other indicators relating to the issues covered in this document. Council utilises the services of id Profile to analyse and present the census and other statistical data to better reflect what is happening for the community of the Bega Valley Shire. id Profile have developed a number of tools available for the whole community to utilise including community profile and atlas, population forecast and economic information. These can be found at;

<http://profile.id.com.au/bega-valley/home>

There is also a considerable body of social research available on a range of issues that affect the social wellbeing of communities. The research that informs this document is referenced in each of the Social Issues Papers.

FEEDBACK

Contact

Community Services

Bega Valley Shire Council

02 6499 2222

council@begavalley.nsw.gov.au

Find us on facebook

www.facebook.com/begavalley.shirecouncil

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SOCIAL ISSUES PAPERS

This document is part of a broader Social Issues Paper produced by the Bega Valley Shire Council. To read the document in its' entirety go to www.begavalley.nsw.gov.au

CONTACT

Community Services

Bega Valley Shire Council

02 6499 2222

council@begavalley.nsw.gov.au