



redlands institute

PO Box 178 Cleveland Q 4163
info@redlandsinstitute.org.au

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Redland City Council
Redlands Housing Strategy Submissions
Reply Paid 21
Cleveland QLD 4163

**Re: Redlands Housing Strategy 2011-2031
Submission to Draft Strategy**

The Redlands Institute is a community based not-for-profit organisation dedicated to creating a better Redlands. It is a non political, non partisan and non sectoral public interest organisation consisting of residents committed to implementing a prosperous and sustainable future for Redlands.

We commend Council on the preparation of the Redlands Housing Strategy 2011-2031 and make the following comments:

(1) Population and Dwelling Estimations

For the strategy to be meaningful the base assumptions have to be realistic. The background data and assumptions have not been released for public comment and it is difficult to reconcile the dwelling targets with current demographics.

The strategy is based on an estimated increase of 21,000 dwellings within the City by 2031. This is consistent with the estimations contained within the South East Queensland Regional Plan for a 2031 resident population of around 170,000.

The Queensland Treasury Office of Economic and Statistical Research estimate Redland's population in 2031 at:

- Medium 188,471; and
- Low 171,761

The Regional plan estimates 169,000 residents at 2031.

The above Low series projects the growth at 1.0% per annum. Historically, Redlands population has increased at the Medium series or more. Redlands has grown annually at 2.1% for the last 4 years to June 2010. By using such a low estimate, the Strategy runs the risk of constraining supply beneath natural demand levels. This will place pressure on housing choice and affordability.

The first Planning action for Outcome 1 is to investigate dwelling targets. It is unfortunate that this was not done prior to the formulation of the Strategy. This review is to be given the highest priority.

(2) Dwelling Occupancy Ratios

Redland City has the dubious honour of being Queensland's fastest ageing population with the largest projected increase in median age for the 10 years to 2021 (from 39 to 43 years).

Redland's 2006 housing stock was 49,779 (according to the SEQRP). If this is increased by 21,000 dwellings the housing stock will be around 70,779 dwellings. At a 171,000 population this results in a ratio of 2.42 persons per dwelling. We have difficulty in reconciling such a high ratio with the projected age structure.

The public release of the base assumptions would make comparisons simpler and strengthen the validity of the strategy.

(3) Deliverability

The Strategy does not address the ability to deliver the requisite dwelling densities or discuss the ramifications of the levels of proposed residential infill. This is a particularly sensitive issue for the general population and should be openly debated.

Redland City has a very specific and constrained urban footprint. The removal of the Springacre Road Enterprise area from the Regional Plan now requires all future land for commercial, industry and employment to be situated in areas previously designated for residential purposes. Past studies have indicated a need for an increase of at least 300-400 hectares of land for employment and commercial purposes. The inclusion of appropriate buffers, corridors and access increases this figure dramatically.

Expanding the footprint is not within the terms of reference for the Strategy, and even if it were it is not politically palatable. Historically, Redlands has consumed greenfields land at less than 6 dwellings per hectare. This is nowhere near the planned minimum 15 dwellings per hectare assumed by the Town Planning Scheme and the proposed strategy. The recent reduction in developable areas in the Kinross Road Master Plan further exacerbates this issue.

The Strategy has not taken the opportunity to address the considerable areas zoned Park Residential within the City. Park Residential areas are an anachronism from a past land-consumptive, low energy cost and car-dependant era.

Whilst delivery of increased densities is somewhat addressed by the Strategy, it is respectfully suggested the Planned Actions of Outcome 1 be strengthened considerably to include such items as:

- Adoption of the Residential 30 guidelines.
- Immediate review of developable areas within the entire urban footprint.
- Implementation of more flexible subdivision provisions.
- Utilisation of residences in alternate zones such as commercial and industrial.
- Removal of the Park Residential zone from the Town Planning Scheme.

(4) Community Building

A primary goal of the Housing Strategy is to address the dysfunctional elements of the Redlands community. The document is merely reactionary to many of the issues rather than being a strategy to improve the overall profile and functionality of Redland City. For example:

4.1 Demographic Profile

Redlands has a dysfunctional demographic profile mainly due to the lack of local employment and service provision. Redlands is missing the 18-38 age cohort and is over-represented in the retired 60+ age brackets. This creates many issues such as disproportionate spending patterns and lack of wealth creation. Building more retirement villages and other facilities for the aged only exacerbates the asymmetric community structure. The strategy has not taken an opportunity to address this. There should be specific actions which concentrate on settings to increase representation of the 18-38 cohort.

4.2 Energy Vulnerability

Redlands is overly reliant on the private motor vehicle due to our pattern of urban development and lack of employment and services. As a consequence, Redlands is extremely vulnerable to spikes in energy costs. What would happen if petrol was \$5.00/litre? To ameliorate this requires a co-ordinated approach dealing with public transport, urban settlement pattern, job creation and centre location. This should be emphasised in the Strategy.

The current urban footprint is not shaped for efficient public transport (it needs to be more linear). As suggested in the Strategy, the most effective responses will be by increased densities around existing centres. However this should be combined with other initiatives such as minimisation of commuting by appropriate local employment settings which encourage jobs and services near the existing dormitory suburbs.

4.3 Employment Self Containment

The Housing Strategy must be co-ordinated with Redlands Employment and Centres Policy documents.

A key outcome of the Redlands Centres and Employment Strategy is to increase urban containment in the Redlands from 40% - 60% by 2031. This target is far too conservative.

A more ambitious target for 2031 is for Redlands to exceed the current Gold Coast levels of +95%. The housing strategy could aim for all new residential development to have 100% employment self containment i.e. 1 to 1.5 jobs created for each new tenement. This is certainly possible for all new developments especially infill in the centres and Master Planned areas. This needs a co-ordinated response and must be resourced.

4.4 Service Provision

The lack of co-ordinated public policy, poor employment containment and dysfunctional demographic profile has resulted in under provision of service delivery by both the private and public sector. This is no more evidenced than in the under-utilisation of the Cleveland CBD.

The achievement of residential densities as proposed by the Strategy requires soft and hard infrastructure and public services to be delivered prior to increases in population.

New residents will only accept increased densities if there is an appropriate level of services delivered. Successful examples of such a strategy are the master planned areas of Springfield and North Lakes. In both of these areas employment, schools, retailing and commercial services were created in advance of the residential development.

(5) Fauna Preservation

The proposed Housing Strategy is in direct conflict with Council's and the State's koala preservation policies.

The Strategy has not taken the opportunity to address the dilemma faced by the current Town Planning Scheme which proposes increased densities in areas of high habitat value.

Unfortunately both humans and koalas want to live in the same locations by the coast. The Regional Plan and Council's strategy to add an additional 11,000 tenements in areas such as Wellington Point, Hilliards Creek and Erapah Creek (which are designated for increased density) will result in decimation of the urban koala population.

The "rural" koala's survival is dependent on maintenance of urban koala numbers. There is a strong argument that this is all too late in any case as the current koala population is below the critical mass necessary for survival.

If Redlands is serious about koalas and fauna preservation in the "Koala Coast" then the housing strategy must identify and preserve the areas of high habitat value. This is not restricted to rural areas and will require "back zoning" of many urban locations. There are many tools such as transferrable development rights which may be utilised to address this.

The corollary is to increase densities in areas of lesser environmental significance. Either will require a major strategic rethink which should be included in the Housing Strategy.

(6) Meaningful Debate

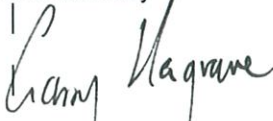
The delivery of a functional community in Redlands is reliant on many factors in addition to the Town Planning provisions and a housing strategy. Council and the State Government must adequately resource the necessary physical and social infrastructure in co-ordination with the private sector.

There are many value judgements to be made to balance growth, sustainable housing, affordability and fauna preservation. The proposed Housing Strategy has not addressed these value judgments.

We encourage a serious and wide ranging community debate about the ramifications of accommodating the projected levels of growth.

We thank you for the opportunity to make this submission and we make the resources of the Redlands Institute available to assist in any further activities.

Yours faithfully



Garry Hargrave
Treasurer and Planning Advisor
Redlands Institute