



PORT of TOWNSVILLE

North Queensland

Section 4 Social values and management of impacts

Townsville Marine Precinct Project

Environmental Impact Statement





4. Social values and management of impacts

4.1 Overview

The objective of the social impact assessment for the TMPP is to describe and assesses the potential impact of the proposal on the objective social environment. It has excluded any detailed assessment of the economic impacts of the proposal which is being undertaken separately by AECgroup and is reported under Section 5.

The description of the existing social environment included an assessment of:

- ▶ The social amenity and use of the project area and adjacent areas for fishing, recreational, tourism, industrial, residential and/or educational purposes;
- ▶ The population, demographic, social and cultural profiles at the local level with regional and state relative comparisons;
- ▶ The community infrastructure and services, access and mobility (including but not limited to housing, health and educational facilities);
- ▶ the recreational, natural, cultural, leisure and sporting facilities in relation to the affected area;
- ▶ The integrity of social conditions, including amenity and liveability, harmony and wellbeing, sense of community, access to social and community services and infrastructure; and public health and safety. The assessment of potential social impacts on the existing social environment included both construction and project completion impacts and addressed immediate and long terms impacts and potential cumulative or additive impacts.

Where potential social impacts were identified, possible approaches to mitigating and monitoring these impacts have also been described.

4.2 Description of existing social values

4.2.1 Methodology

The methodology that has been used to undertake this social impact assessment is based on:

- ▶ Community consultation notes taken as part of the one-on-one community consultation and social impact assessment for the EIS;
- ▶ Written submissions and completed questionnaires received as part of the community consultation and social impact assessment for the EIS;
- ▶ Australian Bureau of Statistics Census data; and
- ▶ Other available background information and reports (GHD Ltd Report for the Proposed Townsville Port Marine Precinct (Lot 773 and Benwell Road) Public Use and Traffic Surveys (June 2008)).

A number of engagement techniques were used in the community consultation and social impact assessments. These techniques included:

- ▶ Development and distribution of fact sheets, letters and questionnaires;



- ▶ Establishment of a dedicated project 1300 number with recorded message service;
- ▶ Establishment of a project website with on-line submissions form;
- ▶ Establishment of a project email address; and
- ▶ Newspaper stories and advertorials.

As noted under Section 1.6, at the time of consultation, artists impressions and detailed layouts of the TMPP were not available, and only an early conceptual diagram was used to assist community and stakeholders visualise the likely layout and footprint of the TMPP (refer Appendix AA). It is, therefore, likely that on review of more detailed visual representations of the TMPP there may be some changes to the type and extent of social impacts identified by community and stakeholders to date.

Community and stakeholders will have an opportunity to review the artists impressions and more detailed layouts of the TMPP when the EIS is released for public comment and in the public displays that will be held as part of that process.

4.2.2 Demographic profile

A detailed analysis of the demographic profile of the Project study area is included in Appendix AA. Key findings are summarised as follows:

In 2006 the resident population of South Townsville was 2,378 people, which represented a decline of 4% since the 2001 census period. The occupancy rate for South Townsville in 2006 was also slightly lower than that of the Townsville Local Government area and the State of Queensland.

South Townsville also has a relatively lower percentage of separate houses (60%) when compared to Queensland and the Townsville Local Government area, and a significantly higher percentage of flats, units and apartments (35%). The decline in separate houses and corresponding increase in flats, units and apartments has been a general trend evident in South Townsville at least since the 1996 census period.

South Townsville has relatively fewer private dwellings that are fully owned (20%) or being purchased (23%) and a relatively high percentage of dwellings that are being rented (40%).

The age profile of the South Townsville population shows that while the percentage of the population over 65 years is similar to that of the Townsville Local Government area and Queensland, the percentage of the population aged 14 years and below is significantly lower than that found in Townsville and Queensland. As a consequence the age dependency ratio, which is the proportion of the dependent population (aged below 14 years and over 65 years) to the working population (aged 15 to 64 years), is lower than that found in the Townsville Local Government area or Queensland. Table 2 also shows that lower age dependency in the population is a trend that has continued since the 1996 census period.

Although the labour force participation rate is similar to that found in Townsville and Queensland, the unemployment rate in South Townsville is marginally higher. In addition, while household incomes are similar to Townsville and Queensland, individuals incomes are significantly higher than that found in Townsville and Queensland.



In comparison to the Townsville Local Government area and Queensland, South Townsville is relatively more 'white collar,' with a relatively higher percentage of managers and professionals and a relatively low percentage of workers in clerical, administrative and sales occupations or who were machinery operators and labourers.

South Townsville has relatively fewer children attending pre-school, primary and secondary school and in comparison to the Townsville Local Government area, relatively fewer people attending university or other tertiary institutions.

In relation to family structure, South Townsville has a relatively higher percentage of couples with children and relatively fewer one parent families. However the percentage of people who were separated or divorced in South Townsville is higher than that found in Townsville or Queensland.

The socio-economic indexes for areas (SEIFA) shows that relative to other locations across Australia, South Townsville is only slightly more advantaged (6th decile).

The Index of Economic Resources reflects the profile of the economic resources of families and the income and expenditure of families, such as income and rent. The relatively low score on this index in the South Townsville area (2nd decile) indicates a relatively high proportion of households on low incomes and living in small dwellings.

The relatively high score on the SEIFA index of education and occupation indicates a high concentration of people in South Townsville with higher education qualifications or undergoing further education, with also a high percentage of people employed in more skilled occupations.

4.3 Potential impacts and mitigation measures

4.3.1 Potential impacts

4.3.1.1 Population and Demographics

The population and demographics of South Townsville is not expected to change significantly as a result of the construction or operation phases of the TMPP. As the construction workforce is expected to be sourced locally there will not be a significant influx of personnel from outside the region into the local suburbs of South Townsville, or surrounds as most of the workforce will already be established elsewhere within Townsville. In the operational phase of the project, particularly in phases 1 and 2, the workforce is expected to be similar in composition to what it is currently, particularly if the existing Ross River marine industries relocate to new premises within the TMPP. In phase 3 of the TMPP there may be an increase in the marine industry and associated workforce however it is not expected to result in any significant changes to the population and demographics of the local area.

4.3.1.2 Business and Employment¹

The marine industries and businesses operating from the northern bank of Ross River either directly or through flow-on businesses employ over 600 staff. All of these businesses will be

¹ Please refer to AECGroup Townsville Marine Precinct Economic Impact Assessment for more detail on the potential business and employment impacts of the TMPP.



affected by the TMPP, with most expecting to relocate to the TMPP as the TPAR bridge will prevent most watercraft from accessing the current premises upstream (Townsville Ross River Marina, Rosshaven Marine, Pacific Marine Group, Riverside Marine, Water Police and AIMS would all have to relocate. Harbourside Coldstores could remain at their current site but would need alternative seafood unloading facilities located in proximity to the trawler fleet. The Department of Defence Ten Terminal Regiment facility would also remain at its current location).

While the TMPP is viewed positively by these industries and businesses (without which they would be forced to relocate elsewhere or close their businesses once the TPAR bridge is operational), there was concern about the potential negative impacts to business in relation to timing and relocation arrangements. If the Ross River marine industries and businesses do not relocate into the TMPP, they would be forced to cease business or relocate to other areas in the region (most likely outside of Townsville) as the opportunities for relocation elsewhere in Townsville are considered very low. This would result in loss of employment for those local residents employed by the marine industries and flow on impacts to local businesses in South Townsville, some of which rely on the marine industries for much of their business.

It is expected that during the construction stages of the TMPP the majority of the required workforce will be sourced locally. There are a number of local construction firms and associated sub-contractors already established in Townsville and North Queensland, therefore the additional employment from the construction phase of the TMPP is likely to be met from within the region's existing labour force. The current easing in the job market due to the economic downturn and the fact that a number of prominent construction firms in the region, with established local workforces, have recently completed large State and Commonwealth funded projects locally means that a local workforce will be available.

In the construction phase it is not anticipated that new skills and training will be required as most of the construction related activities will be able to draw upon an existing workforce and skills base. The operational phase of the TMPP in the initial stages (Stages 1 and 2) will not require an additional workforce with specialised skills not already available locally as it will most likely house the existing marine industries of Ross River. However if there is an expansion of existing marine industries or new marine industries establish in Stage 3, there may be demand for additional employees with specialised skills. The demand is not anticipated to be large enough to result in a skills shortage or the need for specialised training initiatives.

The construction phase of the TMPP will most likely result in positive flow on impacts to existing local and regional businesses, particularly in the manufacturing, whole-sale and retail industries. Businesses located in the South Townsville area will likely benefit from increased patronage due to proximity to the project site. AECgroup (refer Section 5) provides detailed estimates of flow on of service revenue and work to existing communities in the area in the Economic Impact Report.

4.3.1.3 Housing and Essential Services

It was acknowledged if the existing marine businesses were not relocated and were forced to close there would be a flow on affect into South Townsville in relation to essential services such as schools, corner stores, take-away outlets and hotels. A decrease in demand could lead to the services closing or relocating out of the suburb to the detriment of the people currently using



those services, especially the elderly. The TMPP was, therefore, considered likely to have a positive impact on local businesses and employment in the local area by supporting existing services and potentially leading to an increased demand.

In terms of housing and accommodation, it was considered unlikely that there would be a significant impact of the construction workforce on housing demand, community services or other essential services as the majority of the workforce are expected to already be based in Townsville. Because of the central location of the project it is unlikely that the established workforce would seek to relocate from other areas of Townsville into South Townsville or surrounding suburbs and thereby place demand on the existing housing and accommodation availability in those suburbs. Even if a portion of the workforce was required from outside the region, and were relocated into Townsville, it would most likely have a negligible affect on housing and accommodation availability as there has been a downward trend in accommodation and housing demand across Townsville. Further detail assessment of economic impacts resulting from the TMPP are addressed under Section 5 following.

The TMPP construction and operation phases are not anticipated to have an impact, directly or indirectly on local health or educational facilities. The majority of the workforce for both phases will be drawn locally and therefore it is not expected that there will be a significant influx of workers to Townsville or South Townsville in particular, requiring additional facilities.

During the course of the community consultation and social impact assessment, participants provided suggestions for the mitigation and management of potential negative impacts associated with the TMPP. These are outlined below.

4.3.1.4 Social and recreational amenity

A strong attachment to South Townsville was demonstrated by many residents, including both long term residents and new arrivals. Many residents commented on the character and heritage charm of South Townsville and that the suburb was at risk of becoming over industrialised. However, for many people the reclamation of the beach adjacent to Benwell road was considered to be the most significant negative impact of the TMPP. Similarly, people were concerned they were losing more public places and that something should be given back to the community to compensate for this loss. These comments are reproduced in detail in Appendix AA.

Owners of recreational vessels were concerned about whether public pile moorings and boat ramps would be included in the TMPP. While many acknowledged the fact that the predominant activities at the site should be commercial and industrial, there remained a view that it also needed to cater for recreational water pursuits that would be affected by the TPAR and the low level bridge across Ross River.

Residents, beach users, conservation interest groups and Traditional Owners expressed concern regarding adverse effects from the TMPP on the surrounding natural environment and the flow on effects to related recreational and traditional activities such as bird watching, fishing, crabbing, boating and swimming. Concerns regarding increased potential for pollution from industrial sources and effects on traffic flow have also been raised. Section 3 of this document addresses potential impacts to the natural systems associated with the footprint of the Precinct, including traffic, noise and air quality impacts. Social impacts are addressed following.



The TMPP construction and operation phases are not anticipated to have an impact, directly or indirectly on local recreational, leisure or cultural facilities. The majority of the workforce for both phases will be drawn locally and therefore it is not expected that there will be a significant influx of workers to Townsville or South Townsville in particular, requiring additional facilities.

The loss of the Benwell Road beach, however may have an indirect, localised impact on recreational facilities in that people who use the site for exercise and recreation will be displaced to other facilities in and around Townsville. However this is not expected to result in a significant increase in demand for existing facilities. It is also anticipated there would be little effect of the project, or associated workforce, on community infrastructure, services, access or mobility in South Townsville and elsewhere in the Townsville region. This is addressed further under Section 3.3 where infrastructure and transport demands are assessed.

4.3.2 Potential mitigation and management of impacts

4.3.3 Business and employment

Many local residents believed that the marine industries upstream of the future TPAR bridge should be relocated at government expense into the TMPP and compensated for any losses. They believed that the marine industries were essential to the suburb and the region and were being impacted by the TPAR through no fault of their own. Care needs to be taken in determining impacts and management measures for the Precinct to separate matters coming into effect as a result of the construction of the Precinct versus construction of the TPAR bridge, impacts from which are to be addressed under that development process.

POTL advises that a key purpose in developing a Precinct is to provide an alternative purpose-built location for businesses who may be affected by construction of the TPAR bridge, and to provide an opportunity to grow the existing maritime business base for the Townsville Region. If this is achieved, the resultant construction workforce and employment opportunities in the TMPP will provide flow-on benefits to South Townsville, rather than negative impacts.

4.3.4 Public space and the beach

With regards to losing public places, such as the beach, residents believed that something should be given back to the community to compensate for this loss. Statements included:

- ▶ The biggest social impact will be the loss of public space, I'd prefer to see the new residential zone rehabilitated and turned into public space. They can't take everything and give nothing back;
- ▶ You can't put all that commercial there and not give us anything back. It's got to be an equal compromise; and
- ▶ Surely there would be a compromise between the commercial developments, you just can't lock everyone out of it, and we need to cater for the public.

Others were concerned that the atmosphere, physical attributes and the "beach experience" could not be replaced and suggested a section of the beach be retained so people could continue to use the area for recreation. Comments included:

- ▶ You can't compensate for the beach, only with another beach;



- ▶ If the beach could be incorporated into the marina it will be even better;
- ▶ Leave half of it as a beach area. When we come into South Townsville to work at the weekends, we bring our dogs with us and give them a run on the way home;
- ▶ Leave some of the beach if possible; and
- ▶ There are so few areas where you can take your dog. You can't replace the beach.

Several respondents mentioned the port's environmental park and how that could be improved to cater for people once they could not access the beach, one comment "Once the beach is gone, the environmental park could be better maintained and cater more for people with dogs".

Even though most respondents understood the TMPP would be commercial, many believed that if some public space and/or facilities were provided in the TMPP it would go some way towards compensating for the loss of the beach. The community would continue to have somewhere to meet, fish, socialise, look at the view and relax. Suggestions made by the community included:

- ▶ Public boat ramps and parking;
- ▶ Boardwalk;
- ▶ Viewing platform;
- ▶ Parks and shaded areas;
- ▶ Eateries such as fish and chips;
- ▶ Fishing platform;
- ▶ Traditional owner signage for information to tourists;
- ▶ Port of Townsville museum;
- ▶ Toilets, drinking water;
- ▶ Marine life information; and
- ▶ Native plants and bush tucker.

If redevelopment of vacated upstream land occurs, it is envisaged that it will be required to meet the planning objectives for the South Townsville Precinct as identified in the Townsville City Plan. There will be specific recreation and public access opportunities created in the redeveloped upstream lands (e.g. boardwalks, fishing or viewing platforms, food outlets) that should enhance, rather than detract from, the character of the suburb and these will provide alternative recreation opportunities to those that currently exist for Lot 773.

4.3.5 Social amenity

To reduce negative impacts on resident's lifestyles, people suggested the precinct should:

- ▶ Be made more accessible and interesting to the public;
- ▶ Be aesthetically pleasing;
- ▶ Be built in a style that was in keeping with the old buildings of South Townsville;
- ▶ Incorporate a green buffer zone.

Comments in relation to these suggestions included:



- ▶ Different to what I thought, no green buffer for residents from noise, air, pollution;
- ▶ If you said it was going to look like Airlie Beach, low density with pleasure craft and coffee shops, you could imagine it being a positive;
- ▶ It needs to be kept in the old-style we already have here;
- ▶ If you do it properly it could be an attraction, having shops and café there could definitely improve South Townsville;
- ▶ Just because it's a road to the port it doesn't mean tourists don't go down there, they don't want to look at a load of concrete businesses;
- ▶ The precinct could still be an interesting area. In places like Vancouver and Seattle they have boardwalks and fish markets. It could be quite attractive and you could potter about looking at the chandlers and tanks with fish; and
- ▶ It would be great to have an alternative to the Gold Coast look, something more real and working class, but built so people can use it.

POTL advises that although early concept drawings indicated the potential inclusion of public boat ramps in the TMPP, subsequent investigations during the EIS phase have indicated that inclusion of public boat ramps, parking and associated facilities is likely to compromise the commercial viability of a commercial marine facility. POTL has indicated it will not close any existing boat ramps on Port land until the Government has completed a regional boat ramp study and has put alternative facilities in place.

With regard to inclusion of boat ramps in any redevelopment of upstream lands, POTL will leave this decision until after the completion of the regional boat ramp assessment. However, it should be noted that recreational boat ramps in a new residential area have the potential to result in noise conflicts.

Construction of the Marine Precinct will not affect the existing use of Ross River by recreational boat users. It should in fact have a small beneficial effect by extending the calm water environment further seaward once the TMPP is constructed.

With regard to recreational boats currently utilising the pile moorings upstream of the proposed bridge, POTL advises that it has no plans to remove the existing pile moorings. Boats that are able to navigate under the proposed bridge will still be able to moor at the pile moorings.

4.3.6 Environmental impacts

Conservation interest groups felt that breakwaters should be avoided if at all possible and that compensatory bird habitat should be built into the project design if breakwaters were included in the TMPP.

The offshore, crescent-shaped breakwater configuration that has been chosen has been assessed as being an efficient design taking into account economic and environmental factors as well as the ability of the breakwater to fulfil its intended purpose of providing a protected wave environment for the Marine Precinct. Earlier breakwater options that connected to land were not progressed after further assessment revealed they were likely to have a significant impact on environmental values.



It is not anticipated that the chosen breakwater design will have any negative impact on bird habitat. Construction will be undertaken from the Port Eastern Reclaim area or by barge, not from land on the eastern side of Ross River. Modelling has shown that there may be some build-up of sand to the east of the breakwater over time (see the hydrodynamic modelling report). This may provide a beneficial impact of additional bird roosting or feeding habitat. It is also likely that the breakwater structure itself will be utilised by birds as a roosting structure. This assumption is supported by observations of birds using existing Port rock walls (see further detail in the migratory bird report).

Other potential environmental impacts are addressed in the technical reports.

4.3.7 Summary of mitigation and management measures

Table 4-1 below provides a summary of the potential management and mitigation measures for identified social impacts. These are consistent with detailed mitigation and management of impacts identified in the other sections of the EIS (refer Sections 3 and 8 in particular).

Table 4-1 Summary of social impact management and mitigation measures

Potential Impact	Management and Mitigation Measures
Marine industry and business	Clearly defined opportunity for relocation into Stage 1 and 2 of TMPP. Access to equivalent opportunities in the TMPP.
Public spaces	Provision of public spaces in the TMPP and recreational opportunities in the redeveloped lands upstream. Public access to retail outlets in TMPP. Alternative off-leash, dog walking area provided in local area.
Recreational boating	Provide opportunity for inclusion of pile moorings in TMPP subject to commercial viability. No loss of existing boat ramps as a result of development of the TMPP.
Natural environment	Management of construction impacts on marine megafauna and adjacent sea bird foraging and roosting sites. Extension of 6 knot vessel speed limit to outer extent of any new breakwater. Final breakwater configuration to minimise impact on sensitive environmental areas. Pollution control measures incorporated into TMPP design and operation in accordance with EPA requirements.



Potential Impact

Management and Mitigation Measures

Air and Noise pollution

Management of dust and noise during construction and operation.
 Management of dust and noise levels during operation.
 Appropriate restriction of dust creating activities through conditions on any Development Approval.

Visual Amenity

Final TMPP design to minimise visual impact as much as possible.
 Redevelopment of upstream land to be in accordance with amenity and height requirements in Townsville City Plan.
 Vegetation buffer in Environmental Park maintained between TMPP and residential areas.

Traffic

Discourage use of side streets by heavy vehicles accessing TMPP.
 Control density of buildings in redeveloped upstream lands through planning controls in Townsville City Plan.