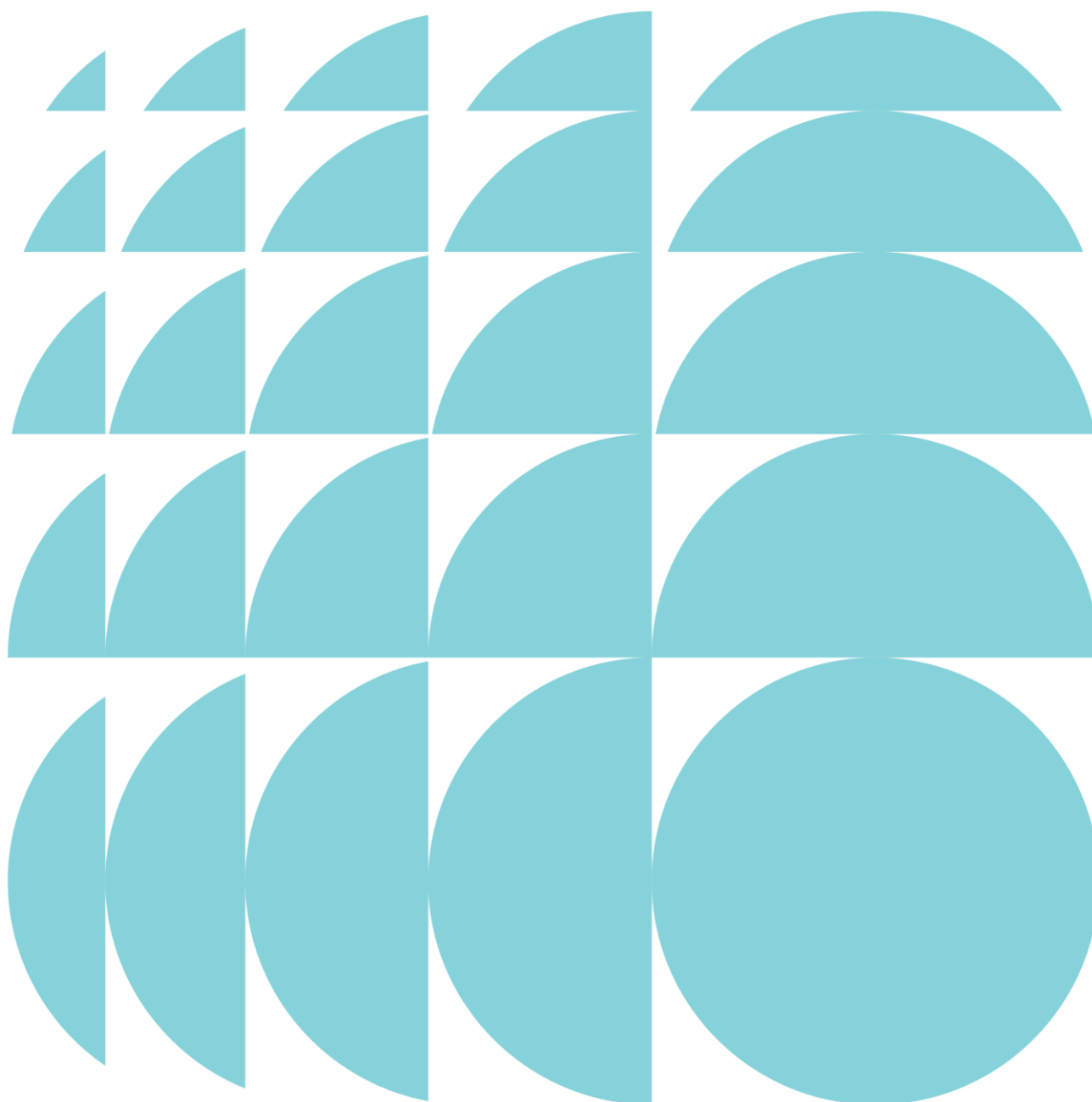


# ETHOS URBAN

Second compliance check of  
Gladstone Regional Council local  
government infrastructure plan

prepared by Liza Valks

21 September 2017





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## 1.0 Introduction

Liza Valks of Ethos Urban has been engaged by Gladstone Regional Council to undertake a second compliance check of its proposed Local Government Infrastructure Plan (LGIP).

Liza Valks, in her capacity as a third party reviewer, is required to:

1. evaluate whether a proposed LGIP complies with the requirements outlined under the statutory guideline for making and amending planning instrument (MALPI), Minister's Guidelines and Rules, and Statutory guideline 03/14 – Local government infrastructure plans, including the LGIP template, the SOW model and the LGIP Checklist.
2. provide a written statement and the completed checklist to the local government detailing the findings of the compliance check.

More specifically this report will:

- consider whether the proposed LGIP:
  - appropriately complies with and addresses any relevant requirements identified in a statutory guideline for LGIPs;
  - appropriately complies with the conditions imposed by the Minister as part of the Minister's first review;
  - the version is not significantly different to the version which has undertaken public consultation; and
  - is consistent with the standard planning scheme provisions;
- complete the LGIP Checklist in Appendix D (of Statutory Guideline 03/14 - Local government infrastructure plans);
- provide the written report to Council providing a written statement, signed by the "Appointed reviewer":
  - confirming that the proposed LGIP appropriately complies with and addresses any relevant requirements identified in a statutory guideline for LGIPs; and/or
  - identifying any outstanding issues with recommendations on how they should be addressed if the proposed LGIP does not fully comply with any matters considered in the second compliance check.

These works have been undertaken.

### 1.1 Scope exclusions

The following items are outside the scope of this review:

- a verification of the accuracy of individual inputs used in the preparation of an LGIP;
- a review of the local government's Long Term Financial Forecast (LTFF) or asset management plan (LTAMP) other than to determine the extent of their alignment with the LGIP.

## 2.0 Compliance check process

The process used to undertake the second compliance check comprises the following steps:

Stage	Description
<b>Engaged</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultant engaged in August after completion of notification.</li> <li>• Documents and other information provided by Gladstone Regional Council during August 2017 and following completion of public notification.</li> <li>• Teleconference with Council's project manager (Jacinta Giles).</li> </ul>
<b>Review</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review commenced in September</li> <li>• Significant material was provided by the Council to support the review including:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ draft revised LGIP</li> <li>○ PAR</li> <li>○ SOW</li> <li>○ Minister's letter and conditions</li> <li>○ submissions received during public notification</li> <li>○ submission response</li> <li>○ other background material as required</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Additional information was requested including PFTIs and PIA mapping</li> <li>• Material was provided and draft comments on reporting provided by the Reviewer</li> <li>• Draft Report issued 18 September 2017</li> </ul>
<b>Final report</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback from the Council in relation to matters raised by the reviewer and some adjustment to the LGIP accordingly made.</li> <li>• Final report issued on 21 September 2017</li> </ul>

The following local government personnel were involved in the compliance check:

Name	Title	Date of discussion (s)	Scope of discussion
Jacinta Giles	A/Senior Engineer – Development	Throughout August and September	Background to public notification process, Minister's conditions; changes to LGIP, discussion on reviewer comments

## 3.0 Compliance check findings

### 3.1 The Gladstone Region

The Gladstone Region is located in Central Queensland and has a population of some 64,000 residents spread across the former Gladstone, Calliope and Miriam Vale local government areas.

The region spans an area of approximately 10,500 square kilometres including coastal townships, urban centres, and rural villages and communities. More specifically residents and services are located in the urban centres of Gladstone and Tannum Sands/Boyne Island, plus the smaller towns of Agnes Water, Ambrose, Baffle Creek, Benaraby, Bororen, Builyan, Calliope, Lowmead, Miriam Vale, Mount Larcom, Many Peaks, Nagoorin, Raglan, Rosedale, Seventeen Seventy, Turkey Beach, Ubobo and Yarwun

The region's economy is underpinned by the large scale industry including those major developments within the Gladstone State Development Area and operations associated with Gladstone Ports Corporation. The Gladstone Area Water Board (GAWB) was established in 1973 and in 2000 commenced operations as a Category 1 commercialised Water Authority under the Water Act 2000. As from the 1st July 2008, GAWB became a registered service provider under the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008.

GAWB owns and operates Awoonga Dam on the Boyne River along with a network of delivery pipelines, water treatment plants and other bulk water distribution infrastructure in the Gladstone region in Central Queensland.

A strong retail and service sector within Gladstone together with tourism and primary production (particularly beef cattle and timber) provide diversity to the region's economy, choice for workers and opportunities for business people. Well developed infrastructure and services, including a regional airport, support local residents, tourists and businesses alike.

Further, the area is also served by large areas of green open space, including several national parks, historical sites, bush walks and marine activities.

The region has generally experienced steady population growth and development over much of its history and forecasts would suggest that will continue. In the last decade, the region experienced a significant spike in growth linked to the mining and resources boom, in particular the LNG industry. Changes in the industry and associated (likely) reduced net in migration to the region are showing up in latest population estimates for Gladstone region which still show growth, but at a more modest rate.

### 3.2 The LGIP process since first compliance review, Minister sign-off and public notification

The process for preparation of the LGIP to public notification was documented in the first compliance review report. The Council submitted all relevant material to the Minister for first review on the 20<sup>th</sup> December 2016. Subsequent discussions and liaison occurred, and on 30 May 2017, the Minister approved, subject to conditions, the Council to proceed to public notification of the draft LGIP.

The Council undertook notification from 26 June to 7 August 2017. A number of submissions were received during this time and are documented in separate reporting by Council (including a summary of submissions and response report).

Council has prepared a revised LGIP in relation to both the matters raised during the public notification process and in response to those conditions imposed by the Minister.

The key matters and comments arising during the Ministerial Review and public notification period are outlined below:

Minister's conditions:

- amend the SOW to incorporate the full unit rate for Transport for relevant values and calculations to reflect the full value of the infrastructure and make any consequential changes to the LGIP and tables as required;
- include the planned densities and demand generation rates used by the Council to undertake the network planning, in particular for the Centre zone, Neighbourhood zone, Specialised Centre zone, High Impact Industry zone and Community Facilities zone;
- a series of 'further advice' suggestions for the LGIP including, notably, the addition of an 'ultimate development' capacity.

Submissions:

- clarification regarding the inclusion or otherwise of trunk stormwater infrastructure in the LGIP;
- clarification of standards or other references used for determining desired standards of service for trunk infrastructure;
- provision (or perceived lack of) future parks as trunk infrastructure;
- clarification on the PIA including: its alignment with the Emerging community zoning; the inclusion of Miriam Vale; and queries regarding other specific locations;
- currency of demographic data used to inform the LGIP and the release of more recent forecasts;
- bulk treated water demand and supply in relation to the Gladstone Area Water Board treatment plant.

Council has responded to all matters raised in an appropriate manner and the LGIP has been amended accordingly. Where the LGIP has not been changed in response to submissions or matters raised, an appropriate response and/or action has been identified in the submissions report.

The key changes or actions in relation to the latest LGIP are noted below:

- the PIA has not been adjusted to include all emerging community zones. The PIA, correctly, has been determined as that area required to accommodate 10-15 years of urban growth for which Council intends to support with trunk infrastructure;
- an "ultimate capacity" has been included in the LGIP based on assumptions for the growth profile used for the balance of the LGIP projections. This has also allowed for an estimate of non-residential development and employment growth to be made and likewise included in both the LGIP and the Planning Assumptions Report;
- the absence of identified future trunk infrastructure for parks and land for community facilities reflects the work done by Council in recent years of proactively securing parkland and land for community services and also the fact that this community is well serviced by this infrastructure. It is also a response to the Council decision to include only district or higher level parks as trunk infrastructure;
- further explanation has been provided in the LGIP to clarify that trunk stormwater is excluded from the LGIP, however, standards are included to inform non-trunk infrastructure provision. While this may not be usual practice, the inclusion provides transparency to the community;

- the Council has made amendments to the LGIP to reflect all advice and mandatory conditions raised by the Minister;
- Council has also updated the SOW to reflect more recent information about works, costing or timing of delivery;
- Council is aware that revised population projections have been released to 2016. These raw figures suggest a more moderate population growth in Gladstone than previously anticipated. In the interests of finalising the LGIP for adoption and so as not to jeopardise meeting the extension timelines, the Council has not sought to revise or update the projections and forecasts within the LGIP or underpinning it. More accurate data and subsequent revised projections will not be available until 2018 and these forecasts will inform subsequent reviews of the LGIP;
- In simple terms the effect of more modest growth will be to delay the delivery of growth related infrastructure. Similarly, a slowing down of growth, supports and reinforces Council's position to not open up the PIA to include all Emerging Community zoned land;
- There is a commitment to ongoing liaison and discussion with the Gladstone Area Water Board in relation to bulk treated water supply.

### **3.3 Further observations based on the review:**

- The State's LGIP template has been used as the basis for the Council's LGIP with only minor, acceptable amendment/variation being made, including some slight variation of format numbering and inclusion of some 'explanatory' text.
- The SOW has been interrogated to ensure that inclusions are 'growth related' – noting that appropriate apportioning to 'renewal related' infrastructure is included.
- The SOW is based on one of the earliest versions prepared by DSDIP (consistent with the fact that the Council's LGIP process commenced some years ago,) rather than the more recent amendment V11 February 2016.
- The SOW has been updated as per conditions and to reflect some other refinements and thinking and Department discussions over the last 9 months.

### **3.4 Liaison and consultation**

- Considerable liaison and discussion with DILGP officers has occurred during the period of the Minister's review and notification. The matters focussed on during these discussions and subsequently reflected in the Ministerial conditions and further advice correspondence have been addressed.
- Consultation also occurred with the Gladstone Area Water Board (GAWB) in terms of future water demand and network planning by GAWB and continues to be ongoing.



## 4.0 Conclusions

The reviewer notes that Gladstone Regional Council planning and engineering staff, and its appointed consultant, are very committed to the finalisation of a high quality and regionally appropriate LGIP. They have worked with DILGP officers to resolve any policy or practice concerns with the earlier draft, and have responded to issues raised in submissions in an open and accountable manner. As a first generation LGIP Council have invested significant resources to its completion and robustness, but acknowledge that it will change and evolve over time.

In my opinion, the proposed LGIP:

- appropriately complies with and addresses any relevant requirements identified in a statutory guideline for LGIPs;
- appropriately complies with the conditions imposed by the Minister as part of the Minister's first review, and further, addresses those matters raised as 'further advice' appropriately;
- the version is not significantly different to the version which was publicly notified, and to the extent that it has changed, these aspects generally add to the understanding and clarity of the LGIP document; and
- it is consistent with the standard planning scheme provisions.

The Council could proceed to the second Ministerial sign off. As a separate note for future reviews and refinement of the LGIP, I would recommend the Council continue to engage with the GAWB and if /where necessary, any matters arising from these discussions be used to inform subsequent reviews of the LGIP.

Noting that changes in growth (either an increase, or slowing down of population growth) generally will have the effect of adjusting the timing for infrastructure delivery, I note that Council should ensure the next timed review of the LGIP include a comparison and revision (if required) of demographic data and subsequent population projections, and scheduled infrastructure.

I understand the Council remains committed to enhance their knowledge and information of local infrastructure. They are also committed to better understanding and alignment between LGIP and the long term financial forecasts.

## 5.0 Recommendations

Liza Valks recommends to the Gladstone Regional Council that the LGIP should proceed unchanged to the Minister for sign off.

## 6.0 Recommended conditions to be imposed

No conditions are imposed.