



## Social Impact Assessment Policy

<b>Date Adopted:</b>	22 September 2009
<b>Council or Corporate Policy</b>	Council Policy
<b>Responsible Division:</b>	Environment and Community Management
<b>Supporting documents, procedures &amp; forms of this policy:</b>	<p>Social Impact Guidelines - For Development applications  <a href="http://www.leichhardt.nsw.gov.au/articleDocuments/724/social-impact-guidelines-for-development-applicants.pdf.aspx">http://www.leichhardt.nsw.gov.au/articleDocuments/724/social-impact-guidelines-for-development-applicants.pdf.aspx</a></p> <p>Social Impact Guidelines - For Council Officers  <a href="http://www.leichhardt.nsw.gov.au/articleDocuments/724/social-impact-guidelines-for-council-officers.pdf.aspx">http://www.leichhardt.nsw.gov.au/articleDocuments/724/social-impact-guidelines-for-council-officers.pdf.aspx</a></p>
<b>References &amp; Legislation:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Planning Institute of NSW, SIA National Position Statement, June 2009</li> <li>- Planning Institute of Australia, Social Impact Assessment Principles, 2006</li> <li>- Liquor Gaming and Racing (OLGR)</li> <li>- Gaming Machines Act 2001</li> <li>- NSW Local Government Act 1993</li> <li>- NSW Disability and Services Act 1993</li> <li>- Federal Disability Discrimination Act 1992</li> <li>- Draft Affordable Housing Policy 2008</li> <li>- Environment Planning and Assessment Act 1979 Sec 79C(1)</li> </ul>

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## 1 Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that SIA is a key mechanism in Council decision-making. It will support Council to deliver a sustainable and liveable community that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. It also provides a guide as to when SIA is required in response to a social consequence that may occur as a result of a proposed development, project, policy, or plan.

## 2 Objectives

The objectives of this Policy are to:

- Ensure social impacts are considered in Council decision-making and planning.
- Enhance consistency and transparency in Council's assessment of the social impacts of new policies, plans, projects or proposed development.
- Maximise positive social impacts and minimise negative social impacts on land-use plans and development, and new Council policies, plans, or projects.
- Support the delivery of the *Leichhardt 2020* vision to: enhance community participation in working towards influencing decisions that affect them; and, to base Council decision-making on meeting environmental, social, and economic sustainability outcomes.

## 3 Definitions

Word/Term	Definition (with examples if required)
Social impact assessment (SIA)	Refers to the assessment of the social consequences of a proposed decision or action (development proposals, plans, policies, and projects) namely the impacts on affected groups of people and on their way of life, life chances, health, culture, and capacity to sustain these.
Social Impact Comment (SIC)	Comments on a social impact/s. It is a basic level of assessment.
Social Impact Statement (SIS)	Is a more in-depth description and analysis of social impacts which recommends management and mitigation measures to address identified impacts. A specialist consultant may be required to complete the SIS.

## 4 Principles

Impact assessment is a method for predicting and assessing the consequences of a proposed action or initiative before a decision is made. The SIA process involves analysing, monitoring, and managing these social consequences, both positive and negative, and any social change processes invoked by them. The principles for effective SIA are to:

- Seek to support socially sustainable development and decision-making, contributing to the determination of best policy or development alternatives.
- Be informed by relevant policy and legislation and integrate policy priorities in the assessment (for example: affordable housing, equitable access to services, integrated community facilities, sustainable transport).
- Acknowledge the values of local communities. That is, be informed by the things that are likely to impact on community wellbeing (these values differ between communities).
- Identify impacts that are directly related to the proposed development, intervention or policy (demonstrate the connection between the intervention and the likely impact).
- Demonstrate rigor and a social science base in presenting evidence.
  
- Address how net social benefit can be enhanced through the development or proposal and how negative social outcomes can be ameliorated and managed through mitigating and monitoring measures.

Developers, applicants, or Council officers, or Council's appointed experts, who are required to consider the social impacts of a proposed development, project, policy, or plan will be required to prepare either a Social Impact Comment or a Social Impact Statement. This Policy provides for consideration of social impacts:

1. When Council is the decision-maker Council's SIA process encompasses:
  - Preparation of SIC or SIS by the proponent.
  - Consideration of SIC or SIS by Council.
  - Decisions by Council in relation to managing and monitoring the impact.
  
2. When Council is commenting on social impacts of a non-Council project, policy, or plan where delegation is vested in another authority.

## 5 Background

Considering social issues and addressing social impacts in its decision-making enables Leichhardt Council (Council) to address the *Leichhardt 2020+ vision* of:

- Making Leichhardt the place where the community wants to live, work, play, and visit.
- Valuing democratic and responsible government.
- Developing commitment, systems, and practices for Leichhardt to be a role model in social, environmental, and economic sustainability.

Social issues embrace all aspects of human life including how we live, our culture, our community, our health and well-being, and our aspirations. Council is committed to the process of social impact assessment (SIA) as a means of considering social issues more comprehensively and consistently in its planning and decision-making. Demand for a greater focus on social impacts has been driven through:

- A changing demographic profile and pressures arising from inner-urban life and proximity to the Sydney CBD.
- Increasing awareness of planning authorities to apply social criteria in making decisions about development and land use.
- Increasing emphasis by Council and the community on sustainability.
- Increasing emphasis on creating a cohesive, connected, caring, safe, and equitable community.

## **6 When is social impact assessment required?**

### Background

As well as applying to the urban planning process, Social Impact Assessment provides a useful tool for examining policy and program objectives and serves as a decision-making tool that contributes to the rational problem solving process. SIA does this by identifying the social costs and benefits of adopting a particular course of action. As such, Leichhardt Municipal Council requires the use of the process of SIA in:

1. Development proposals or amendments.
2. Developing and reviewing strategic land-use plans.
3. Identifying impacts on the community as part of new or revised Council plans, policies, or projects.
4. Liquor and gaming licence applications.

This Policy provides for consideration of social impacts:

1. When Council is the decision-maker, Council's SIA process encompasses:
  - Preparation of Social Impact Comment or Social Impact Statement by the proponent.
  - Consideration of Social Impact Comment or Social Impact Statement by Council.
  - Decisions by Council in relation to managing and monitoring the impact.
2. When Council is commenting on social impacts of a non-Council project, policy, or plan where delegation is vested in another authority.

### Development proposals or amendments

Leichhardt Council has a statutory obligation under Section 79C of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act* to include consideration of social impacts of development proposals where relevant in determining a development application.

Council has determined that consideration of social impacts is required for specific developments. Applicants will be required to provide either:

- a Social Impact Comment (SIC), or
- a Social Impact Statement (SIS).

The *SIA Guidelines for Development Applicants* provide detailed guidance on the types of development proposals that will require either an SIC or SIS and how to lodge and complete the SIC or SIS.

### Strategic land use plans

Council requires the consideration of social impacts in developing strategic land-use plans, for example, the Comprehensive Local Environment Plan. This will support Council to effectively guide development and land-use change, and will strengthen the capacity of Council to plan and budget for future facilities and services. SIA will:

- identify the potential impacts of the changes proposed.
  - estimate potential demand for community facilities and services.
  - identify opportunities to manage both positive and negative impacts.
- provide Council and future developers with a range of information about potential residents and their needs.

Consideration of social impacts should be undertaken before the strategic land use plan is adopted, to ensure there is opportunity for modification to the plan and that the social impact implications are addressed. The *Social Impact Assessment Guidelines for Council Officers* provide guidance on the SIA process and under which circumstances either a Social Impact Comment or a Social Impact Statement is required.

### New or revised Council policies, plans or projects

Council requires the consideration of social impacts for new or revised Council projects, policies, or plans that may affect significant social change processes. Analysis of social issues forms an increasingly important part of Council reporting and decision-making. This complements the more traditional assessments of environmental and economic impacts.

*It is not Council's policy to require the consideration of social impacts for projects, policies, or plans that trigger only minor social change. For example, minor works, erection of signage, or parks maintenance.*

The key benefits for considering social impacts in this way are in Council developing a better understanding of the impacts of change on communities, and supporting the implementation of key Council policies, plans, or projects such as the Affordable Housing Policy, Disability Discrimination Act Action Plan, or the redevelopment of a community centre. The process of SIA will be integrated into key Council reporting processes to expand the social impact information available for decision-making.

The *Social Impact Assessment Guidelines for Council Officers* provide guidance on the social impact assessment process and under which

circumstances either an Social Impact Comment or Social Impact Statement is required.

### Liquor and gaming licence applications

Under State legislation, consideration of social impacts is required for: -Extensions of trading hours & alterations, additions or refurbishment at licensed premises as required by the *Liquor Act 2007*. -Applications to increase gaming machines at licenses premises as required by the *Gaming Machines Act 2001*. The NSW liquor and gaming laws allow communities to have input into decisions and actions against licensed venues that may have an adverse impact on local neighbourhoods.

### Liquor

In most cases an application for a new liquor licence, extended trading hours, or variation of a liquor licence requires the applicant to lodge a Community Impact Statement with the Casino, Liquor and Gaming Control Authority. As part of this process the applicant is required to notify Councils and local police of their intention to lodge a liquor licence application and provide them with a copy of the Community Impact Statement when it is lodged with the Casino, Liquor and Gaming Control Authority.

### Gaming

Registered clubs and hotels are also required to lodge a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) with the Liquor Administration Board when applying to increase their poker machine threshold. There are two types of gaming SIAs -class 1 and class 2. Class 2 Social Impact Assessments must be lodged with the Liquor Administration Board and also with Council and other community agencies.

The Office of Liquor and Gaming website ([www.olgr.nsw.gov.au](http://www.olgr.nsw.gov.au)) prescribes what is required in regards to completing and lodging a Community Impact Statement or Social Impact Assessment for liquor and gaming licenses and under what circumstances. Council's Social Impact Assessment Policy and Guidelines do not apply to completing a Community Impact Statements or Social Impact Assessment required for liquor or gaming licence. Council's policy is to review all liquor licence applications it receives and where appropriate make submissions to the Casino, Liquor and Gaming Control Authority and to the Liquor Administration Board on all Class 2 Social Impact Assessments that it receives.

## **7 Policy Implementation**

It is Council's policy to:

- Require SIA as a component of applications for specific types of development.
- Require SIA of significant new or revised strategic land use plans.
- Require SIA of new or revised projects, policies, or plans that may trigger significant social change.

- Require the integration of SIA into Council reporting and decision-making processes to enhance Council policy and decisions.
- Evaluate the impact of this Policy and its Guidelines on a regular basis to identify further opportunities for improvement.
- Review calls from other government agencies for consideration of social impacts, for example, liquor and gaming applications, and where appropriate make submissions.

Council's requirements to consider social impacts are guided by legislation and Council policy. The legislative framework ranges from general requirements to specific obligations and includes:

- The *Environment Planning and Assessment Act 1979 Sec 79C(1)* specifying the matters Council should take into consideration when assessing Development Applications: *"The likely impacts of that development, including environmental impacts on both the natural and built environments and social and economic impacts in the locality."* (Sec 79C(1)(b))
- The *Liquor Act 2007* which specifies the circumstances under which an application for a new liquor licence, extended trading hours, or variation of a liquor licence require the applicant to lodge a Community Impact Statement (CIS) with the Office of Liquor Gaming and Racing (OLGR) and notify their local council.
- The *Gaming Machines Act 2001* which specifies the conditions under which clubs and hotels are required to lodge an SIA with the Liquor Administration Board and with Council and other community agencies.
- Matters in relation to State Environmental Planning Policy 10: Retention of low cost rental accommodation.
- Matters arising from Commonwealth and State legislation and policy such as the *NSW Local Government Act 1993*, the *NSW Disability and Services Act 1993*, and the *Federal Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.

Council's policy framework in relation to developing SIA policies and guidelines includes, but is not limited to:

- Council's Local Environment Plan and Development Control Plans.
- Social impacts of extended hours of trading on gambling and alcohol.
- *Draft Affordable Housing Policy 2008* that prioritises the development of social impact assessment and guidelines.
- Funding agreements with Commonwealth and State government agencies.

## 8 Version Control and Change History

Version Control	Date Effective	Approved By	Amendment
1	22 September 2009	Council	
2			

Leichhardt Council  
Social Impact Guidelines for Development Applicants  
18 August 2009

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose

The purpose of these Social Impact Assessment Guidelines (the Guidelines) is to provide practical guidance for development applicants in considering social impacts for land use developments, in accordance with Council's Social Impact Assessment Policy (SIA Policy) (August 2009). These Guidelines should be used in conjunction with the SIA Policy.

## 1.2 SIA Policy Objectives

The objectives of Council's SIA Policy are to:

- Ensure social impacts are considered in Council decision-making and planning.
- Enhance consistency and transparency in Council's assessment of the social impacts of new policies, plans, projects or proposed development.
- Maximise positive social impacts and minimise negative social impacts on land-use plans and development, and new Council policies, plans, or projects.
- Support the delivery of the *Leichhardt 2020* vision: to enhance community participation in working towards influencing decisions that affect them; and, to base Council decision-making on meeting environmental, social, and economic sustainability outcomes.

## 1.3 Council's vision

Considering social issues and addressing social impacts in its decision-making enables Leichhardt Council (Council) to address the *Leichhardt 2020+ vision* of:

- Making Leichhardt the place where the community wants to live, work, play and visit.
- Valuing democratic and responsible government.
- Developing commitment, systems, and practices for Leichhardt to be a role model in social, environmental and economic sustainability.

Social issues embrace all aspects of human life including how we live, our culture, our community, our health and well-being, and our aspirations.

Council is committed to social impact assessment (SIA) as a means of considering social issues more comprehensively and consistently. Demand for a greater focus on social impacts has been driven through:

- A changing demographic profile and pressures arising from inner-urban life and proximity to the Sydney CBD.
- Increasing pressure for planning authorities to apply social criteria in making decisions about development and land use.
- Increasing emphasis by Council and the community on sustainability.
- Increasing emphasis on creating a cohesive, connected, caring, safe, and equitable community.

## 1.4 Policy context

Council's requirements to consider social impacts in relation to Development Applications are guided by legislation and Council Policy. The

legislative framework ranges from general requirements to specific obligations and includes:

- The *Environment Planning and Assessment Act 1979 Sec 79C(1)* specifying the matters Council should take into consideration when assessing Development Applications: *"The likely impacts of that development, including environmental impacts on both the natural and built environments and social and economic impacts in the locality."* (Sec 79C(1)(b))
- Matters in relation to State Environmental Planning Policy 10: Retention of low cost rental accommodation.
- Matters arising from Commonwealth and State legislation and policy such as the *NSW Local Government Act 1993*, the *NSW Disability and Services Act 1993*, and the *Federal Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.

Council's policy framework in relation to developing social impact assessment policies and guidelines includes:

- Council's Local Environment Plan and Development Control Plans.
- *Draft Affordable Housing Policy 2008* that prioritises the development of social impact assessment and guidelines.
- Funding agreements with Commonwealth and State government agencies.

## 1.5 Assistance

The Council's Assessment Team is available to support development applicants (applicants) with the social impact assessment process. Please refer any questions about these Guidelines or Council's SIA Policy to the Assessment Team by calling (02) 9367 9222.

## 2 Principles and definitions

### 2.1 What is social impact assessment?

Impact assessment is a method for predicting and assessing the consequences of a proposed action or initiative before a decision is made.

**Social impact assessment (SIA)** refers to the assessment of the social consequences of a proposed decision or action (development proposals, plans, policies, and projects)<sup>1</sup>. The SIA process involves analysing, monitoring, and managing these social consequences, both positive and negative, and any social change processes invoked by them.

These social consequences could occur in one or more of the following areas:

- People's way of life - how they live, work, play and interact with each other.
- Their culture – their shared beliefs or customs.
- Their community – its cohesion, stability, character, services and facilities.
- The population – including increases or decreases in population numbers.
- Their political systems – the extent to which people are able to participate in decisions that affect their lives.
- Their natural and built environment.
- Their health and well-being.
- Their personal and property rights.
- Their fears and aspirations and safety<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Planning Institute of NSW, SIA National Position Statement, June 2009

<sup>2</sup> International Association for Impact Assessment, International Principle for Social Impact Assessment p.2, May 2003

These Guidelines detail the key components required by Council for effective SIA.

### 2.2 Principles of effective SIA

Effective SIA should:

- Seek to support socially sustainable development and decision-making, contributing to the determination of best policy or development alternatives.
- Be informed by relevant policy and legislation and integrate policy priorities in the assessment (for example: affordable housing, equitable access to services, integrated community facilities, sustainable transport).
- Acknowledge the values of local communities. That is, be informed by the things that are likely to impact on community wellbeing (these values differ between communities).
- Identify impacts that are directly related to the proposed development, (demonstrate the connection between the intervention and the likely impact).
- Demonstrate rigor and a social science base in presenting evidence.
- Address how net social benefit can be enhanced through the development and how negative social outcomes can be ameliorated and managed through mitigating and monitoring measures<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Planning Institute of Australia, Social Impact Assessment Principles, 2006

## 2.3 Consideration of social impacts required by Council

Applicants who are required to consider the social impacts of a proposed development will be required to prepare either a **Social Impact Comment** or a **Social Impact Statement**.

### **Social Impact Comment**

A **Social Impact Comment (SIC)** comments on a social impact/s. It is a basic level of assessment that will briefly address social impacts (positive, neutral, negative). It need not be long but must contain sufficient information for Council to make a decision. A SIC should not require specialist technical assistance to complete. *See Section 6 of these Guidelines for How to Complete a Social Impact Comment.*

### **Social Impact Statement**

A **Social Impact Statement (SIS)** is a more in-depth description and analysis of actual and potential social impacts which recommends management and mitigation measures to address identified impacts. A specialist consultant may be required to complete the SIS. *See Section 7 of these Guidelines for How to Complete a Social Impact Statement.*

### **Social Impact Assessment process**

Council's SIA Policy provides for consideration of social impacts:

1. When Council is the decision-maker Council's SIA process encompasses:
  - Preparation of SIC or SIS by the proponent.
  - Consideration of SIC or SIS by Council.
  - Decisions by Council in relation to managing and monitoring the impact.
2. When Council is commenting on social impacts of a non-Council project, policy, or plan where delegation is vested in another authority.

### 3 Role of Leichhardt Council, the applicant, and the community

Council, applicants and the community all have a role in the identification and assessment of social impacts on the community<sup>4</sup>.

#### 3.1 Council's Role

Council is the decision-making body and determines whether a Development Application should receive approval or development consent. As such, Council staff should be satisfied that the social impacts of a proposed development have been addressed.

Leichhardt Council is committed to sustainability, creating a liveable community, and open and participative governance. Council will use the SIA Policy and Guidelines to support Council to meet this commitment to its community.

Council has a responsibility to notify the community of a proposed development that will affect social change and where appropriate seek a response from the community as part of the Development Application process on the social impact of the development.

Council officers can also provide guidance on the SIA process. Applicants should seek this assistance in the first stage of the process.

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<sup>4</sup> These roles are adapted from the Newcastle Social Impact Assessment Policy for Development Applications, November 1999

#### 3.2 Applicant's Role

It is the applicant's role to prepare, when required, either an SIC or SIS in accordance with Council's SIA Policy and SIA Guidelines. If an SIC or SIS is required the applicant (including Council for its own projects) will be responsible for undertaking the assessment and any associated costs, such as hiring a suitable consultant.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that any possible negative impacts are identified, managed, and mitigated, and that any possible positive impacts are identified and enhanced.

It is also the applicant's responsibility to consult with communities affected by the proposed development, if considered beneficial to the process.

#### 3.3 Community's Role

The community's role is to provide useful comment on the development application with regard to its social impact. The community may be involved through a range of community engagement techniques.

#### 3.4 Government Agencies' Roles

Depending on the nature of the proposal, the applicant may seek input from various government agencies. State government agencies may be able to assist with specific advice or information regarding a proposal. A comprehensive list of potential Government contacts is provided at **Appendix 1**.

## 4 When is social impact assessment required?

### 4.1 Background

Leichhardt Council considers social impacts as part of Development Applications in circumstances where it considers there may be **significant** social effects resulting from the proposed development.

Council has discretion to decide which matters are relevant to a development proposal. The *Environment Planning and Assessment Act 1979* Sec 79C(1) specifies the matters Council should take into consideration when assessing Development Applications.

Council has determined that consideration of social impacts is required for specific developments (see Table 1, Section 5 of these Guidelines) other than exempt or complying developments. Applicants will be required to provide either a:

- Social Impact Comment (SIC), or
- Social Impact Statement (SIS).

### 4.2 Trigger questions: Do I need to consider social impacts?

As a guide, if as a result of your proposed development you answer "Yes" or "Maybe" to any of the following questions, the issues will need to be appropriately addressed through either a Social Impact Comment or a Social Impact Statement.

Trigger questions:

- Will the proposal be likely to give rise to a significant increase or reduction in the number of people in the area?
- Will the proposal disadvantage or benefit any particular social group?
- Will the proposal be likely to affect an increase or decrease in employment opportunities in the locality?
- Will the proposal increase traffic or impact on parking in the area?
- Will the proposal have a significant impact on existing housing stock in the locality, particularly low rental housing?
- Will the proposal impact upon existing community facilities or services in the locality and require an increase in community facilities or services?
- Is the proposal likely to give rise to increased conflict in the community or adversely impact upon community identity?
- Is the proposal likely to enhance or detract from the cultural life of the community?
- Will the proposal create increased noise in the area?
- Will the proposal create areas of risk for residents or pedestrians within or adjacent to the proposal?
- Is the proposal likely to give rise to increased community concern regarding public safety?
- Will the proposal affect local cohesion, stability, or character?
- Will the proposal affect the local natural environment?
- Will the proposal affect local resident or worker health and well-being?
- Will the change affect future generations?

## 5 The SIA process

### 5.1 Process Overview

The process for applying SIA to Development Applications consists of five key stages:

Stage 1	Applicant contacts Council to determine the need for either a Social Impact Comment (SIC) or a Social Impact Statement (SIS) as part of the Development Application and to clarify its scope.
Stage 2	Applicant completes SIC or SIS in accordance with Council Policy and Guidelines. Council provides guidance to the applicant as required.
Stage 3	The applicant submits the completed SIC or SIS with the Development Application in accordance with Council's requirements.
Stage 4	Council evaluates and uses the SIC or SIS in considering the Development Application which it approves or refuses.
Stage 5	The social impacts and adherence to conditions of consent are monitored.

**Appendix 2 provides a flow chart of the SIA process.**

### 5.2 Key stages to the impact assessment process

**STAGE 1: APPLICANT CONTACTS COUNCIL TO DETERMINE THE NEED FOR EITHER A SIC OR SIS AS PART OF THE DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION AND TO CLARIFY ITS SCOPE.**

The first stage in the SIA process involves determining whether a Social Impact Comment (SIC) or Social Impact Statement (SIS) is required.

It is recommended that the applicant consults with Council officers about the proposed development prior to lodging a formal Development Application. SIA is an adopted Policy of Leichhardt Council (August 2009). Therefore, if an SIC or SIS is required, the Development Application will not be complete without it.

During the consultation with Council's Assessment Team, Council officers will explain Council's SIA Policy and Guidelines, and outline Council's requirements.

To determine whether the development proposal requires a SIC or a SIS please consult **Table 1** and discuss your development with the Council officer to be certain of what is required.

Table 1 Guide to type of impact assessment required

Social Impact Comment	Social Impact Statement
- Boat Repair Facility	- Affordable Housing (Rental Housing, new/ loss of/ intensification, Boarding House, Hostel)
- Bulky Goods Premises	
- Car Parking (stand alone Commercial Carparks)	
- Charter & Boating Tourism Facility	- Amusement centres
- Community gardens	- Animal Training & Boarding Establishment
- Depot	- Backpackers Accommodation
- Emergency Services Facility	- Boarding houses
- Environmental Facility	- Brothels/Sex services (New or enlargement/intensification)
- Health Consulting Rooms	- Childcare Centre (caring for more than 7 children)
- Horticulture	- Community facilities
- Kiosks	- Crematorium
- Landscape & Garden Supplies	- Educational establishments
- Liquid Fuel Depot	- Entertainment Facility
- Local shops	- Freight Transport Facility
- Mixed Use Development < 20 Dwellings	- Function Centre
- Passenger Transport Facility (Bus Stop, Bus Shelters only)	- Funeral Chapel / Funeral Home / Crematorium / Mortuary
- Place of Aboriginal Heritage	- Funeral Home
- Recreation Facility (Indoor) (Gym & Personal Training Only)	- Group homes
- Restaurant, Food & Drink Premises (Excluding Licensed Premises)	- Health Services Facilities (Excluding Health Consulting Rooms)
- Telecommunication Facility	- Helipad/Heliport
- Veterinary Hospital	- Hospitals
- Water-based commercial and	- Hotel / Motel
	- Information & Education Facility

Social Impact Comment	Social Impact Statement
recreation facilities	- Licensed premises (Hotels, Taverns, and Bottle Shops) if deemed necessary
- Water Recreation Structure	- Major roads, arterial or transport corridors
	- Marina
	- Markets
	- Multi-Dwelling Housing (developments of more than 25 dwellings, Eg. Large Flat/unit/mixed use developments)
	- Nightclub
	- Offensive and/or Hazardous Industry
	- Passenger Transport Terminals / facilities (Excluding Bus Stops & Bus Shelters)
	- Place of Public Entertainment
	- Places of Public Worship
	- Port Uses/ Port Facilities
	- Pub
	- Public transport facilities / Depot
	- Recreation areas
	- Recreation facilities – Only Major Indoor or Outdoor facilities
	- Registered Club
	- Residential Care Facility
	- Restricted Premises
	- Retail Premises (Shopping Centres only)

Social Impact Comment	Social Impact Statement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- School</li> <li>- SEPP (Seniors Living) Housing</li> <li>- Seniors Housing</li> <li>- Service Stations</li> <li>- Sewage Treatment Plant</li> <li>- Waste Facilities (All Types)</li> <li>- Water System / Facility (all types)</li> <li>- Wetland</li> </ul>

Council will work with the applicant to determine the scope of any particular SIC or SIS.

**PLEASE NOTE:**

*This table is intended as a guide and it should be noted that while some Development Applications may not be included in the table, or may fit the description for a Social Impact Comment, Council reserves the right to request a Social Impact Statement due to the **NATURE AND SCALE** of the proposal and its impacts.*

### 5.3 Nature and scale of impacts

The consideration of social impacts will respond to the nature and scale of a particular development. Social impacts can have a number of dimensions and these will be important to consider. These include<sup>5</sup>:

- Qualitative. Some impacts may be positive for some people, while the same impact may be negative for others.

<sup>5</sup> The implementation of social impact assessment in local government: Jenny Summerville A/Prof Laurie

Byus; Roseanne Germann; Michael Cuthill

- Certainty. Is the impact an intended or unintended consequence of the development?
- Frequency. How often will the impact occur? Is it a once off or will it be recurring? For example, there is a difference between the impact of a single event such as an annual festival and public entertainment that occurs every week on the same site.
- Severity. The magnitude and strength of the impact. Will the impact change during the course of the proposal?
- Time period. Is the impact for a fixed term, limited duration, or long term?
- Locality. The area of the impact. The size of the local population, particularly those living close to the site and details of that community are essential.
- Susceptibility and vulnerability. How susceptible the community/environment is to the impact. For example what is the SEIFA (Socio-Economic Index for Area)<sup>6</sup> indices, alcohol and gaming data, and vulnerable population data.
- Mitigability. Is there potential for the impact to be mitigated?
- Degree of permanence. Is it temporary, is it cumulative, is it reversible or irreversible? Will it trigger associated changes in the environment arising as a consequence of the development?

**STAGE 2: APPLICANT COMPLETES SIC OR SIS IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL POLICY AND GUIDELINES. COUNCIL PROVIDES GUIDANCE TO THE APPLICANT AS REQUIRED.**

**Social Impact Comment (SIC)**

In most cases, an SIC can be completed by the applicant. The Social Impact Comment must be completed using the Social Impact Comment

<sup>6</sup> This is an index produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics that measure relative levels of disadvantage within communities.

Form provided at Appendix 3 of these Guidelines.

*Refer to Section 6 of these Guidelines for How to Complete a SIC.*

### **Social Impact Statement (SIS)**

If an SIS is required it must be conducted by a suitably qualified person. If the applicant is not qualified, a consultant who is suitably qualified must be engaged by the applicant at their expense. Qualified practitioners include those that:

- Have social science training and/or extensive experience in the field of community needs analysis and community consultation;
- Are familiar with the types of information required, and may work in a range of fields, including town planning, social planning, sociology, anthropology, human geography.

Where stakeholder and/or resident consultation is required as part of the SIS, specialist skills may be required to consult with particular groups, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, youth, or people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds.

Social Impact Statements prepared for a Development Application will provide Council and the applicant with information that includes:

- Pre-change demographic profile of the suburb the development is located within. It may be required to go to the Census Collector District Level to get a relevant profile.
- Description of the development including the expected resident and worker profile.
- Description of the scope of the proposed changes.
- Identification of the probable impacts, including impacts likely to affect minority groups, marginalised groups, different age, income and cultural groups, and future generations.

- Assessed potential demand for community facilities and services from the expected new community and how this will impact on access by the existing community.
- Consideration of how the proposed development contributes to key Council policies and plans. For example, Council's Community and Cultural Plan and Disability Discrimination Act Action Plan.
- As evaluation of the impacts of the proposal and suggestions on how any negative impacts might be managed and mitigated and any positive impacts enhanced.

### **STAGE 3: APPLICANT SUBMITS THE COMPLETED SIS OR SIC WITH THE DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL'S REQUIREMENTS.**

The SIC or SIS is to be submitted with the Development Application.

If relevant, the SIC or SIS should identify design and amenity improvements that have occurred as a result of the social impact assessment findings.

### **STAGE 4: COUNCIL EVALUATES AND USES THE SIC OR SIS IN CONSIDERING THE DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION WHICH IT APPROVES OR REFUSES.**

Council assesses the SIC or SIS submitted by the applicant to determine:

- That it addresses any issues that may have been raised in any prior consultation with Council officers.
- Any gaps or inconsistency in the information.
- That the description and analysis of the SIS is consistent with known social issues and trends in the area.

Appropriate Council officers will discuss the adequacy of the SIC or SIS with the applicant prior to reporting to Council. They may require additional research to enable Council's assessment of the Development Application as part of the comprehensive planning process.

Council's evaluation of the SIC or SIS will be used in its consideration of the entire planning application, as part of the planning application process.

The SIC or SIS will be assessed by a team of suitably qualified Council officers. Evidence of community input, clear and thorough impact identification and mitigation considerations, and a thorough assessment all contribute to good impact assessment. This will assist in the decision-making process.

Council officers will then either:

- Recommend approval to Council. (This may involve appropriate consent conditions to ensure that any impacts are well managed).
- Recommend refusal by Council. This refusal will be based on aspects of the development that are not appropriate for the local/regional area and do not comply with planning instruments as well as aspects associated with the social impact.

#### **STAGE 5: THE SOCIAL IMPACTS AND ADHERENCE TO CONDITIONS OF CONSENT ARE MONITORED.**

If the application is approved, then the identified social impacts and adherents to the Development Application's conditions of consent are monitored.

#### **Conditions of consent**

These will be followed up by the Principal Certifying Authority to ensure conditions are complied with. Some developments may have conditional

consents for a period of time and require follow up impact assessment at the end of a trial period.

All relevant stakeholders will be advised of Council's determination of the application.

## 6 How to complete a Social Impact Comment

### 6.1 What is a Social Impact Comment?

#### A **Social Impact Comment** (SIC):

- Is a comment on social impact/s.
- Is a basic level of assessment that will briefly address social impacts (positive, neutral, negative). It need not be long but must contain sufficient information for Council to make a decision.
- Should be included in the Statement of Environmental Effects accompanying a Development Application.
- Need not be long but must contain enough information for Council to make a decision.
- Is not required to include community consultation. However, neighbours, tenants, and current and potential users may be able to provide useful information about impacts.
- Is able to be prepared by a non-specialist.
- Includes any positive social impacts and how they can be enhanced.
- Describes how any potential negative social impacts are to be minimised in the interests of both the occupants/users of the development and the wider community.

### 6.2 Form for completing an SIC

If the applicant is required to provide a Social Impact Comment, the applicant must sufficiently respond to the questions in the Social Impact Comment Form provided overpage.

When submitting the SIC Form with the Development Application the applicant must ensure that enough information is provided for Council to make a decision. It is not sufficient for you to state that there will be no impact therefore the questions do not need answering.

**The form for completing a Social Impact Comment is provided overpage.**



## 7 How to complete a Social Impact Statement

### 7.1 Background

The consideration of social impacts involves many methods of inquiry and data sources. Therefore, the design of each Social Impact Statement (SIS) should respond to the circumstances at hand. For some projects this may involve a desk-top assessment, for others site visits, analysis of demographic data, interviews with land owners and wider community consultation. Council's priority is with a sound, evidence-based approach to each SIS process.

If the applicant is required to complete a Social Impact Statement, the following steps will provide guidance on how to complete a high quality Social Impact Statement that will meet Council's objectives.

### 7.2 Steps in completing an SIS

#### **Step 1: SCOPING**

Scoping involves establishing the range of issues to be considered and the geographical reach of possible social impacts as a result of the proposal. It will identify the likely scale and timing of impacts, communities affected, and the information required to be collected.

Potential social impacts should be identified and a process commenced to address them. There are a number of different social impacts that may

occur as a result of a development and these should be considered in your SIS. These are detailed in Table 2

Table 2 Social impacts

Access and mobility
Accommodation and housing
Community services and facilities
Community structure (severance, cohesion, and identity)
Crime and public safety
Cultural and community values
Employment
Health
Interaction between new development and the existing community
Local economic effects
Needs of target social groups (children and families, older people, young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse, People with a disability, women)
Population change (size and characteristics)
Recreation facilities
Residential amenity and quality of life
Risk perception in the community
Social equity (displacement, needs of disadvantaged groups).

Some of the possible social impacts may be dealt with briefly. Others may require more information. Direct as well as indirect, long term and short term, positive and negative, passing and accumulating impacts should be identified. Refer to Section 5.3 for how social impacts can range in intensity and impact.

### ***Community involvement at the scoping phase***

It is important in the development of the SIS that community involvement in the process is meaningful and included early in the process. Affected communities have an important role to play in discussing the impacts.

Affected communities include:

- Those who live or work nearby.
- Those who will hear, smell or see a development or its effects.
- Those who have an interest in the proposal but may not live in close proximity, for example, precinct committee, neighbourhood centres.
- Those who may normally use the land where the proposal is to be located.
- Local non-government organisations.

Where the scope of a proposed development requires that stakeholder and community consultation be completed, a plan detailing the consultation should be prepared. This should include the purpose, methodology, and the number and profile of participants. Involving communities is one of the keys to increasing the extent that the development benefits local communities whilst ensuring the negative impacts on people are minimised.

It is important that information is presented in a format that is understood by the affected community. It may be necessary to translate information into community languages or involve the use of advisers to explain technical issues in plain English. At this stage in the process, Council would expect some form of public participation to involve the community in issue identification.

Refer to Council's Community Engagement Framework on Council's website at [www.leichhardt.nsw.gov.au/Community-Engagement.html](http://www.leichhardt.nsw.gov.au/Community-Engagement.html) for a description of community engagement techniques that could be used for

completion of your SIS. The type of technique will depend on the size and scale of your application. This can be determined in consultation with Council.

### **Step 2: COMMUNITY PROFILING**

A quality SIS will provide a detailed community social profile of the affected area. Baseline data of the Leichhardt LGA, its suburbs and social groups, and community services and facilities, is available on Council's website: [www.leichhardt.nsw.gov.au/Community-Profile.html](http://www.leichhardt.nsw.gov.au/Community-Profile.html) and the Australian Bureau of Statistics website [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au).

There is also extensive data available from various government departments that will assist in the development of the profile. **Appendix 1** provides a full list of data sources.

The size of the local community, particularly those living close to the site, and details of that community are essential to a good SIS. The social profile required for the SIS should include:

- Demographic data which should correspond as closely as possible to the defined community including current and projected population data and target group data (number of young people, older people, children, people with a disability, socio-economic profile, CALD community, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community). This may require a description at Census Collector District level.
- Analysis of the demographic profile of the affected area and how they will be affected by the proposal.
- Audit of neighbouring community services and facilities.
- Significant community or cultural issues relevant to the affected area.
- Audit of major institutions, relevant to the application, located in the area.

For major proposals, Council officers may require the applicant to consult with neighbouring Local Government Areas.

### **Step 3: PREPARE THE Social Impact Statement**

The SIS is a summary of the research, consultation, and analysis completed and should cover:

- All identified social impacts, both positive and negative.
- How the key matters identified in consultation with Council officers have been addressed.
- Strategies to monitor and manage, if required, positive and negative impacts.
- Mitigation measures to reduce negative impacts and enhance positive impacts.

#### **Key outputs required in your Report are:**

1. DESCRIPTION (including maps and drawings where relevant) of the proposal including the proposed resident and/or worker profile.
2. The likely PROFILE of residents and workers affected by the proposal.
3. Identification of the types of SOCIAL CHANGES that may occur as a result of the proposal, including positive and negative, long term and short term, passing, and accumulating changes.
4. The PROBABLE IMPACT of the change, including impacts likely to affect minority groups, marginalised groups, different age, income and cultural groups and future generations.
5. Feedback from stakeholders and residents gathered through CONSULTATION.
6. ANALYSIS of negative and positive impacts, direct and indirect impacts on the current and surrounding communities, specific Council objectives and strategies for the area.
7. Identification of the RELATIVE EQUITY of the impacts, and how benefits

and losses will be distributed to different community sectors.

8. PLANS and strategies for MONITORING AND MITIGATING the impacts of the proposed development if it proceeds.
9. A SOCIAL IMPACT STATEMENT summarising the research and consultation outcomes, including ways to maximise positive and minimise negative impacts.

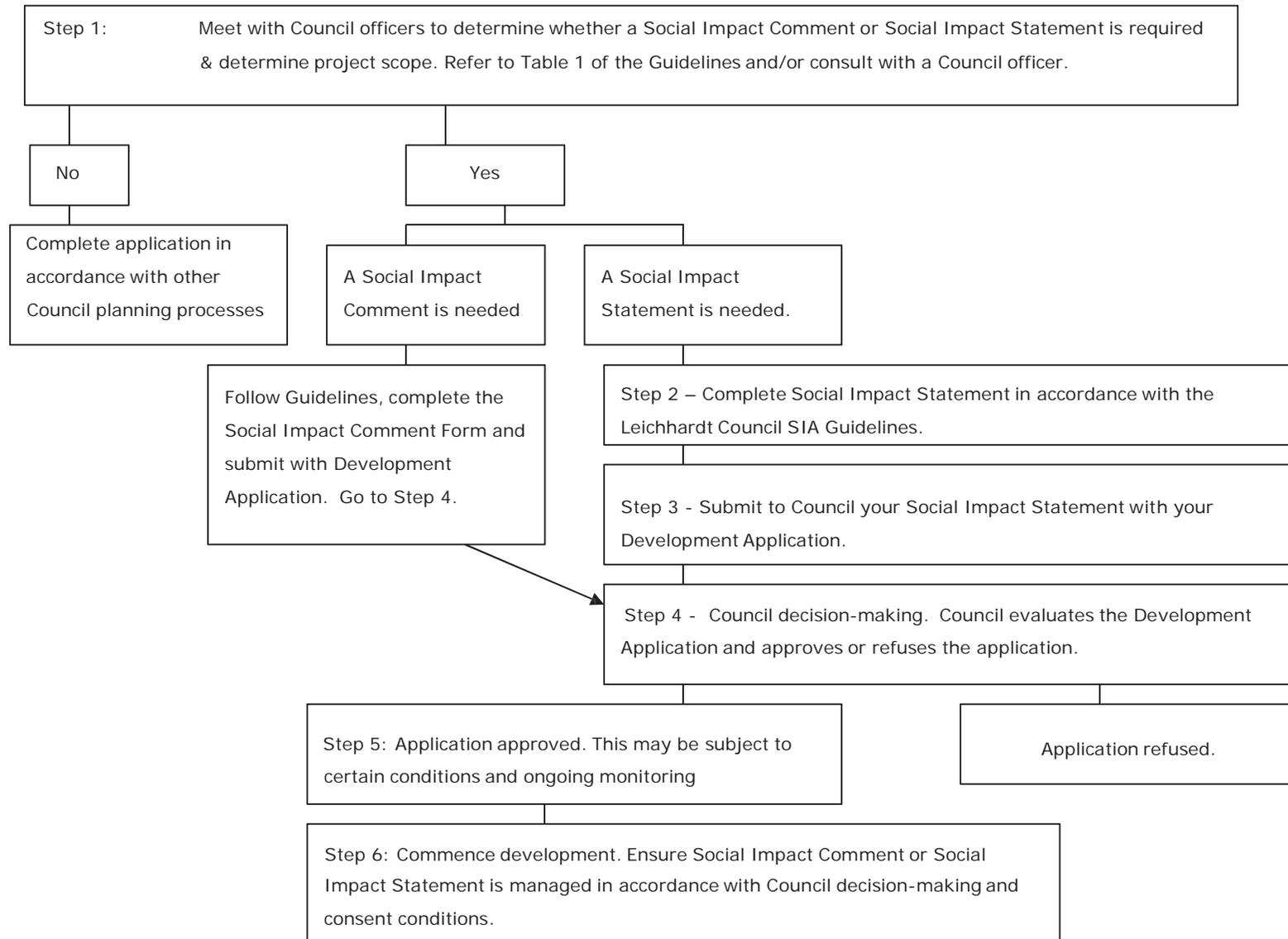
Appendix 1 Government agency sources of data<sup>7</sup>

Source	Information available
<b>Leichhardt Council</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Leichhardt 2020 Community Strategic Plan</li> <li>- Social Plan</li> <li>- Population Projections</li> <li>- Affordable Housing Policy</li> </ul>
<b>Australian Bureau of Statistics</b> <a href="http://www.abs.gov.au">www.abs.gov.au</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Census data (demographic, economic/employment, housing)</li> <li>- Manufacturing and retail censuses</li> <li>- Building and construction data</li> <li>- Economic and employment/unemployment data</li> <li>- Social trends data</li> <li>- Disability data</li> <li>- Victims of crime survey</li> <li>- Health data</li> <li>- Tourism data</li> </ul>
<b>NSW Government Agencies:</b> (All NSW government agency web sites can be accessed from the following site: <a href="http://www.nsw.gov.au">www.nsw.gov.au</a> )	
<b>NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (Attorney General's Department)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Crime statistics for NSW and LGAs</li> <li>- Specialist crime data and comparative trend analysis</li> </ul>
<b>Department of Community Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supported accommodation information</li> <li>- Child abuse and domestic violence statistics</li> <li>- Childcare licence information</li> </ul>
<b>Department of Education and Training</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enrolments in government and private schools</li> <li>- Enrolment of special groups (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders; Non-English Speaking Background students)</li> </ul>
<b>Department of Fair Trading</b>	Rental Bond Board data (rents, type of dwellings)
<b>Department of Housing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Waiting list numbers</li> <li>- Client profiles</li> <li>- Housing stock information</li> <li>- Boarding house data</li> </ul>
<b>Department of Transport</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Passenger travel for all modes of transport (by traffic zones and statistical local areas)</li> <li>- Freight movement survey</li> <li>- Journey to work data</li> <li>- Information on future road and public transport</li> </ul>

<sup>7</sup> Based on information included in the Newcastle Social Impact Assessment for Development Applications, City of Newcastle

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- networks</li> </ul>
<b>Department of Planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Population projections (LGA and regions)</li> <li>- Demographic trend analyses</li> <li>- Urban Development Program (UDP) production data – new release areas</li> <li>- Metropolitan Urban Development Program (MUDP) production data – established areas</li> <li>- Employment Lands Development Program data</li> <li>- Housing data – quarterly <i>Rent and Sales Report</i></li> <li>- Regional housing statistics and market analysis</li> </ul>
<b>NSW Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In-patient statistics (Casemix)</li> <li>- Community health data</li> <li>- Hospital facility data</li> <li>- Waiting list information</li> <li>- Range of health indicators (eg mortality data)</li> <li>- Alcohol and drug dependency data</li> </ul>
<b>NSW Police Department</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mapped crime data by local area commands (available through local police stations)</li> <li>- Crime data</li> <li>- Annual customer satisfaction surveys (levels of reporting and police response)</li> </ul>
<b>Tourism New South Wales</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Visitor numbers (by country of origin)</li> <li>- Tourist expenditure data</li> <li>- Hotel/motel accommodation figures</li> </ul>
<b>Valuer General's Department</b>	Average house prices by type of dwelling and locality (based on a 'typical' sale not survey data)
<b>Australian Government Agencies</b>	
<b>Centrelink</b>	Number of persons on social security benefits
<b>Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs</b>	DEETYA Small Area Labour Market Quarterly Statistics (unemployment rates, labour force data)

Appendix 2 Flowchart of steps involved in the social impact assessment process for development applicants



Leichhardt Council

Guidelines for Council Officers

For completing social impact assessments for significant projects,  
policies, or plans

18 August 2009

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose

The purpose of these Guidelines is to provide practical guidance for Council officers in considering social impacts for Council projects, policies, or plans that may trigger **significant** social change in the Leichhardt Local Government Area (LGA). They are written in accordance with Council's Social Impact Assessment Policy (SIA Policy) (August 2009). These Guidelines should be used in conjunction with the SIA Policy.

## 1.2 SIA Policy Commitment

It is Council's policy to:

- Require social impact assessment (SIA) as a component of applications for specific types of development.
- Require SIA of significant new or revised strategic land use plans.
- Require SIA of new or revised policies, plans, or projects that may affect significant social change.
- Require the integration of SIA into Council reporting and decision-making processes to enhance Council policy and decisions.
- Evaluate the impact of this Policy and its Guidelines on a regular basis to identify further opportunities for improvement.
- Respond to calls from other government agencies for consideration of social impacts, for example, liquor and gaming applications.

It is not Council's policy to require the consideration of social impacts for policies, plans, or projects that trigger only **minor** social change. For example, minor works, erection of signage, or parks maintenance.

## 1.3 SIA Policy Objectives

The objectives of Council's SIA Policy are to:

- Ensure social impacts are considered in Council decision-making.
- Enhance consistency and transparency in Council's assessment of the social impacts of new projects, policies, or plans or proposed development.
- Maximise positive social impacts and minimise negative social impacts on land-use plans and development, and new Council policies, plans, or projects.
- Support the delivery of the *Leichhardt 2020* vision to: enhance community participation in working towards influencing decisions that affect them; and, to base Council decision-making on meeting environmental, social, and economic sustainability outcomes.

## 1.4 Council's vision

Considering social issues and addressing social impacts in its decision-making enables Leichhardt Council (Council) to address the *Leichhardt 2020+ vision* of:

- Making Leichhardt the place where the community wants to live, work, play and visit.
- Valuing democratic and responsible government.

- Developing commitment, systems, and practices for Leichhardt to be a role model in social, environmental and economic sustainability.

Council is committed to the SIA process as a means of considering social issues more comprehensively and consistently. Demand for a greater focus on social impacts has been driven through:

- A changing demographic profile and pressures arising from inner-urban life and proximity to the Sydney CBD.
- Increasing pressure for planning authorities to apply social criteria in making decisions about development and land use.
- Increasing emphasis by Council and the community on sustainability.
- Increasing emphasis on creating a cohesive, connected, caring, safe, and equitable community.

## 1.5 Policy context

Council's requirements to consider social impacts are guided by legislation and Council policy. The legislative framework ranges from general requirements to specific obligations and includes:

- The *Environment Planning and Assessment Act 1979 Sec 79C(1)* specifying the matters Council should take into consideration when assessing Development Applications: *"The likely impacts of that development, including environmental impacts on both the natural and built environments and social and economic impacts in the locality."* (Sec 79C(1)(b))
- The *Liquor Act 2007* which specifies the circumstances under which an application for a new liquor licence, extended trading hours, or variation of a liquor licence require the applicant to lodge a

Community Impact Statement (CIS) with the Office of Liquor Gaming and Racing (OLGR) and notify their local council.

- The *Gaming Machines Act 2001* which specifies the conditions under which clubs and hotels are required to lodge an SIA with the Liquor Administration Board and with Council and other community agencies.
- Matters in relation to State Environmental Planning Policy 10: Retention of low cost rental accommodation.
- Matters arising from Commonwealth and State legislation and policy such as the *NSW Local Government Act 1993*, the *NSW Disability and Services Act 1993*, and the *Federal Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.

Council's policy framework in relation to developing SIA policies and guidelines includes, but is not limited to:

- Council's Local Environment Plan and Development Control Plans.
- Social impacts of extended hours of trading on gambling and alcohol.
- *Leichhardt Municipal Council Draft Affordable Housing Policy 2009* that prioritises the development of social impact assessment and guidelines.
- Funding agreements with Commonwealth and State government agencies.

## 2 Definitions and principles

### 2.1 What is social impact assessment?

Impact assessment is a method for predicting and assessing the consequences of a proposed action or initiative before a decision is made.

**Social impact assessment (SIA)** refers to the assessment of the social consequences of a proposed decision or action (development proposals, plans, policies, and projects)<sup>1</sup>. The SIA process involves analysing, monitoring, and managing these social consequences, both positive and negative, and any social change processes invoked by them.

These social changes could occur in one or more of the following areas:

- People's way of life - how they live, work, play and interact with each other.
- Their culture – their shared beliefs or customs.
- Their community – its cohesion, stability, character, services and facilities.
- The population – including increases or decreases in population numbers.
- Their political systems – the extent to which people are able to participate in decisions that affect their lives.
- Their natural and built environment.
- Their health and well-being.
- Their personal and property rights.
- Their fears and aspirations and safety<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Planning Institute of NSW, SIA National Position Statement, June 2009

<sup>2</sup> International Association for Impact Assessment, International Principle for Social Impact Assessment

p.2, May 2003

These Guidelines detail the key components required by Council for effective social impact assessment.

### 2.2 Principles of effective SIA

Effective SIA should:

- Seek to support socially sustainable development and decision-making, contributing to the determination of best policy or development alternatives.
- Be informed by relevant policy and legislation and integrate policy priorities in the assessment (for example: affordable housing, equitable access to services, integrated community facilities, sustainable transport).
- Acknowledge the values of local communities. That is, be informed by the things that are likely to impact on community wellbeing (these values differ between communities).
- Identify impacts that are directly related to the proposed development, (demonstrate the connection between the intervention and the likely impact).
- Demonstrate rigor and a social science base in presenting evidence.
- Address how net social benefit can be enhanced through the development and how negative social outcomes can be ameliorated and managed through mitigating and monitoring measures<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Planning Institute of Australia, Social Impact Assessment Principles, 2006

## 2.3 Consideration of social impacts required by Council

Council officers who are required to consider the social impacts of a proposed project, policy, or plan will be required to prepare either a **Social Impact Comment** or a **Social Impact Statement**.

### **Social Impact Comment**

A **Social Impact Comment** (SIC) comments on a social impact/s. It is a basic level of assessment that will briefly address social impacts

(positive, neutral, negative). It need not be long but must contain sufficient information for Council to make a decision. An SIC should not require specialist technical assistance to complete. *See Section 5 of these Guidelines for How to Complete a Social Impact Comment.*

### **Social Impact Statement**

A **Social Impact Statement** (SIS) is a more in-depth description and analysis of actual and potential social impacts which recommends management and mitigation measure to address identified impacts. A qualified person must complete the SIS. *See Section 6 of these Guidelines for How to Complete a Social Impact Statement.*

### **Social Impact Assessment process**

Council's Policy for social impact assessment provides for consideration of social impacts:

1. When Council is the decision-maker Council's SIA process

encompasses:

- Preparation of SIC or SIS by the proponent.
- Consideration of SIC or SIS by Council.

- Decisions by Council in relation to managing and monitoring the impact.

2. When Council is commenting on social impacts of a non-Council project, policy, or plan where delegation is vested in another authority.

### 3 When is consideration of social impacts required?

#### 3.1 Background

Leichhardt Council considers social impacts as part of new or revised Council projects, policies, or plans in circumstances where it considers there may be significant social change resulting from the proposal.

Council officers are required to provide either an SIC or a SIS for the following:

1. Developing and reviewing strategic land-use plans. For example, the Comprehensive Local Environment Plan.
2. Identifying impacts on the community as part of new or revised Council policies, plans, or projects. For example, the *Disability Discrimination Act Action Plan*, a proposal to close a Council-owned childcare or community centre, or the *Affordable Housing Policy*.

Council may be required to engage an independent consultant for completion of the social impact assessment.

Small scale plans, policies, or projects, such as minor works, parks maintenance, or installing street signage, that will not affect significant social change will not require an SIC or SIS to be completed.

#### 3.2 Trigger questions: Do I need to consider social impacts?

As a guide, if as a result of your proposed project, policy, or plan you answer "Yes" or "Maybe" to any of the following questions, the issues will need to be appropriately addressed through either an SIC or SIS:

- Will the proposal be likely to give rise to a significant increase or reduction in the number of people in the area?
- Will the proposal disadvantage or benefit any particular social group?
- Will the proposal be likely to affect an increase or decrease in employment opportunities in the locality?
- Will the proposal increase traffic or impact on parking in the area?
- Will the proposal have a significant impact on existing housing stock in the locality, particularly low rental housing?
- Will the proposal impact upon existing community facilities or services in the locality and require an increase in community facilities or services?
- Is the proposal likely to give rise to increased conflict in the community or adversely impact upon community identity?
- Is the proposal likely to enhance or detract from the cultural life of the community?
- Will the proposal create increased noise in the area?
- Will the proposal create areas of risk for residents or pedestrians within or adjacent to the proposal?
- Is the proposal likely to give rise to increased community concern regarding public safety?
- Will the proposal affect local cohesion, stability, or character?
- Will the proposal affect the local natural environment?
- Will the proposal affect local resident or worker health and well-being?

### 3.3 Strategic land use plans

Council requires the consideration of social impacts in developing strategic land-use plans. For example, the Comprehensive Local Environment Plan. This will support Council to effectively guide development and land-use change, and will strengthen the capacity of Council to plan and budget for future facilities and services. SIA will:

- provide a snapshot of the current community and conditions of the area under consideration.
- identify strategic opportunities to utilise recommendations and strategies from current Council community plans and policies.
- estimate the expected community profile of the area/s, should the plan as described proceed.
- identify the potential impacts of the changes proposed.
- estimate potential demand for community facilities and services.
- identify opportunities to manage both positive and negative impacts.
- provide Council and future developers with a range of information about potential residents and their needs.

Consideration of social impacts should be undertaken before the strategic land use plan is adopted, to ensure that there is opportunity for modification to the plan and that the social impact implications are addressed.

### 3.4 New or revised Council policies, plans, or projects

Council requires the consideration of social impacts for new or revised Council projects, policies, or plans that may trigger **significant** social change. Analysis of social issues forms an increasingly important part of Council reporting and decision-making. This complements the more traditional assessments of environmental and economic impacts.

The key benefits of applying the process of social impact assessment in this way are in Council developing a better understanding of the impacts of change on communities, and supporting the implementation of key Council policies, plans, or projects.

The consideration of social impacts will be integrated into key Council reporting processes to expand the social impact information available for decision-making.

## 4 The SIA process

### 4.1 Process Overview

The process for Council officers to follow for applying SIA to new or revised policies, plans, or projects consists of five key stages:

Stage 1	Council identifies the need for a new or revised project, policy, or plan.
Stage 2	Council officers assess the need to prepare either an SIC or SIS – in accordance with these Guidelines.
Stage 3	Council officer or consultant completes the SIC or SIS in accordance with Council's SIA Policy and these Guidelines.
Stage 4	The completed SIC or SIS is included in the Report to Council for approval or refusal.

**Appendix 2 provides a flow chart of the SIA process.**

### 4.2 Key stages to impact assessment process

**STAGE 1: COUNCIL IDENTIFIES THE NEED FOR A NEW OR REVISED PLAN, POLICY, OR PROJECT.**

Council will identify the need for a new or revised project, policy, or plan.

**STAGE 2: COUNCIL OFFICERS ASSESS THE NEED TO PREPARE AN SIC OR SIS – IN ACCORDANCE WITH THESE GUIDELINES.**

The second stage involves determining whether a Social Impact Comment (SIC) or Social Impact Statement (SIS) is required to accompany the Report to Council on the new or revised project, policy, or plan.

To determine whether the proposed project, policy, or plan requires either an SIC or SIS, please consult **Table 1** and discuss with your Manager. The type of impact assessment required will also depend on the **NATURE AND SCALE** of the proposal and its impacts (See Section 4.3).

*PLEASE NOTE: Small scale plans, policies, or projects that will not affect significant social change will not require an SIC or SIS to be completed.*

Table 1 Is a Social Impact Comment or Social Impact Statement required?

MATTER, PROJECT, PLAN OR POLICY	ACTION REQUIRED
<b>Site specific Matters</b>	Refer SIA Guidelines for Development Applicants and SIA Guidelines for Council Officers
<b>Locality improvement Plans</b> For example: Traffic Management Plans; main street upgrade; Parks Plans of Management.	Refer SIA Guidelines for development applicants and SIA Guidelines for Council Officers
<b>Service &amp; Program Planning</b> For example: Youth Services; Neighbourhood Centre Programs; Children's Services; Waste Services	Social Impact Comment
<b>Policy Development</b> For example: Graffiti Policy; Community Engagement Framework.	Social Impact Comment
<b>Major Projects &amp; Strategic issues</b> For example: Callan Park; M4 extension; Sustainability Strategy; Land-use rezoning.	Social Impact Statement

<b>Strategic Plans</b> For example: Corporate Plan, Local Environment Plan; Community Cultural Plan	Social Impact Statement
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However evidence base and analysis may be included within project documentation.

### 4.3 Nature and scale of impacts

The consideration of social impacts will respond to the nature and scale of a particular development. Social impacts can have a number of dimensions and these will be important to consider. These include<sup>4</sup>:

- Qualitative. Some impacts may be positive for some people, while the same impact may be negative for others.
- Certainty. Is the impact an intended or unintended consequence of the development?
- Frequency. How often will the impact occur? Is it a once off or will it be recurring? For example, there is a difference between the impact of a single event such as an annual festival and public entertainment that occurs every week on the same site.
- Severity. The magnitude and strength of the impact. Will the impact change during the course of the proposal?
- Time period. Is the impact for a fixed term, limited duration, or long term?
- Locality. The area of the impact. The size of the local population, particularly those living close to the site and details of that community are essential.

<sup>4</sup> The implementation of social impact assessment in local government: Jenny Summerville A/Prof Laurie Buys; Roseanne Germann; Michael Cuthil

- Susceptibility and vulnerability. How susceptible the community/environment is to the impact. For example what is the SEIFA (Socio-Economic Index for Area)<sup>5</sup> indices, alcohol and gaming data, and vulnerable population data.
- Mitigability. Is there potential for the impact to be mitigated?
- Degree of permanence. Is it temporary, is it cumulative, is it reversible or irreversible? Will it trigger associated changes in the environment arising as a consequence of the development?

**STAGE 3: COUNCIL OFFICER OR DELEGATED PERSON COMPLETES THE SIC OR SIS IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL POLICY AND GUIDELINES.**

**Social Impact Comment (SIC)**

Council officer completes the SIC. The SIC must be completed using the SIC Form provided at Appendix 3 of these Guidelines.

*Refer to Section 5 of these Guidelines for How to Complete a SIC.*

**Social Impact Statement (SIS)**

If an SIS is required it must be conducted by a suitably qualified person. There may be occasions where Council is required to engage a consultant to complete the SIS.

Where stakeholder and/or resident consultation is required as part of the SIS, specialist skills may be required to consult with particular groups, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, youth, or people from

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds.

Social Impact Statements prepared for a new or revised project, policy, or plan will provide Council with information that includes:

- Pre-change demographic profile of the suburb the development is located within. It may be required to go to the Census Collector District Level to get a relevant profile.
- Description of the development including the expected resident and worker profile.
- Description of the scope of the proposed changes.
- Identification of the probable impacts, including impacts likely to affect minority groups, marginalised groups, different age, income and cultural groups, and future generations.
- Assessed potential demand for community facilities and services from the expected new community and how this will impact on access by the existing community.
- Consideration of how the proposed development contributes to key Council policies and plans. For example, Council's Community and Cultural Plan and Disability Discrimination Act Action Plan.
- As evaluation of the impacts of the proposal and suggestions on how any negative impacts might be managed and mitigated and any positive impacts enhanced.

**STAGE 4: THE COMPLETED SIC OR SIS IS INCLUDED IN THE REPORT TO COUNCIL FOR APPROVAL OR REFUSAL.**

Council will consider the Report with completed SIC or SIS

<sup>5</sup> This is an index produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics that measure relative levels of disadvantage within communities.

## 5 How to complete a Social Impact Comment

The form for completing a Social Impact Comment is provided overpage.

### 5.1 What is a Social Impact Comment?

A **Social Impact Comment** (SIC):

- Is a comment of a social impact/s.
- Is a basic level of assessment that will briefly address social impacts (positive, neutral, negative). It need not be long but must contain sufficient information for Council to make a decision. Need not be long but must contain enough information for Council to make a decision.
- Is not required to include community consultation.
- Is able to be prepared by a non-specialist.
- Includes any positive social impacts and how they can be enhanced.
- Describes how any potential negative social impacts are to be minimised.

### 5.2 Form for completing an SIC

If the Council officer is required to provide an SIC, he/she must sufficiently respond to the questions in the Social Impact Comment Form provided at overpage in these Guidelines.

When including the SIC Form with the Council Report the Council officer must ensure that enough information is provided for Council to make a decision.



## 6 How to complete a Social Impact Statement

### 6.1 Background

The consideration of social impacts involves many methods of inquiry and data sources. Therefore, the design of each Social Impact Statement (SIS) should respond to the circumstances at hand. For some proposals this may involve a desk-top assessment, for others site visits, analysis of demographic data, interviews with residents, and wider community consultation. Council's priority is with a sound, evidence-based approach to each SIS process.

If the Council officer is required to complete an SIS, the following steps will provide guidance on how to complete a high quality SIS that will meet Council's objectives.

### 6.2 Steps in completing an SIS

#### **Step 1: SCOPING**

Scoping involves establishing the range of issues to be considered and the geographical reach of possible social impacts as a result of the proposal. It will identify the likely scale and timing of impacts, communities affected, and the information required to be collected.

Potential social impacts should be identified and a process commenced to address them. There are a number of different social impacts that may occur as a result of a proposed plan, policy, or project and these should be considered in your SIS. These are detailed in Table 2.

**Table 2 Social impacts**

Access and mobility
Accommodation and housing
Community services and facilities
Community structure (severance, cohesion, and identity)
Crime and public safety
Cultural and community values
Employment
Health
Interaction between new development and the existing community
Local economic effects
Needs of target social groups (children and families, older people, young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse, People with a disability, women)
Population change (size and characteristics)
Recreation facilities
Residential amenity and quality of life
Risk perception in the community
Social equity (displacement, needs of disadvantaged groups).

Some of the possible social impacts may be dealt with briefly. Others may require more information. Direct as well as indirect, long term and short term, positive and negative, passing and accumulating impacts should be identified. Refer to Section 4.3 for how social impacts can range in intensity and impact.

### ***Community involvement at the scoping phase***

It is important in the development of the SIS that community involvement in the process is meaningful and included early in the process. Affected communities have an important role to play in discussing the impacts.

Affected communities include:

- Those who live or work nearby.
- Those who will be affected by the proposal.
- Those who have an interest in the proposal but may not live in close proximity, for example, precinct committee, neighbourhood centres.
- Local non-government organisations.

Where the scope of a proposal requires that stakeholder and community consultation be completed, a plan detailing the consultation should be prepared. This should include the purpose, methodology, and the number and profile of participants. Involving communities is one of the keys to increasing the extent that the proposal benefits local communities whilst ensuring the negative impacts on people are minimised.

It is important that information is presented in a format that is understood by the affected community. It may be necessary to translate information into community languages or involve the use of advisers to explain technical issues in plain English. At this stage in the process, Council would expect some form of public participation to involve the community in issue identification.

Refer to Council's Community Engagement Framework on Council's website at [www.leichhardt.nsw.gov.au/Community-Engagement.html](http://www.leichhardt.nsw.gov.au/Community-Engagement.html) for a description of community engagement techniques that could be used for completion of your SIS. The type of method used will depend on the size  
Leichhardt Council SIA guidelines for Council officers

and scale of your application. This can be determined in consultation with Council.

### **Step 2: COMMUNITY PROFILING**

A quality Social Impact Statement will provide a detailed community social profile of the affected area. Baseline data of the Leichhardt LGA, its suburbs and social groups, and community services and facilities, is available on Council's website: [www.leichhardt.nsw.gov.au](http://www.leichhardt.nsw.gov.au) and the Australian Bureau of Statistics website [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au).

There is also extensive data available from various government departments that will assist in the development of the profile. **Appendix 1** provides a full list of data sources.

The size of the local community, particularly those living close to the site, and details of that community are essential to a good SIS. The social profile required for the SIS should include:

- Demographic data which should correspond as closely as possible to the defined community including current and projected population data and target group data (number of young people, older people, children, people with a disability, socio-economic profile, CALD community, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community). This may require a description at Census Collector District level.
- Analysis of the demographic profile of the affected area and how they will be affected by the proposal.
- Audit of neighbouring community services and facilities.
- Significant community or cultural issues relevant to the affected area.
- Audit of major institutions, relevant to the application, located in the area.

For major proposals, Council officers may require the applicant to consult with neighbouring LGAs.

### **Step 3: PREPARE THE SIS**

The SIS is a summary of the research, consultation, and analysis completed and should cover:

- All identified social impacts, both positive and negative.
- How the key matters have been addressed.
- Strategies to monitor and manage, if required, positive and negative impacts.
- Mitigation measures to reduce negative impacts and enhance positive impacts.

#### **Key outputs required in your Report are:**

1. DESCRIPTION (including maps and drawings where relevant) of the proposal including the proposed resident and/or worker profile.
2. The likely PROFILE of residents and workers affected by the proposal.
3. Identification of the types of SOCIAL CHANGES that may occur as a result of the proposal, including positive and negative, long term and short term, passing, and accumulating changes.
4. The PROBABLE IMPACT of the change, including impacts likely to affect minority groups, marginalised groups, different age, income and cultural groups and future generations.
5. Feedback from stakeholders and residents gathered through CONSULTATION.
6. ANALYSIS of negative and positive impacts, direct and indirect impacts on the current and surrounding communities, specific Council objectives and strategies for the area.
7. Identification of the RELATIVE EQUITY of the impacts, and how benefits

and losses will be distributed to different community sectors.

8. PLANS and strategies for MONITORING AND MITIGATING the impacts of the proposed development if it proceeds.
9. A SOCIAL IMPACT STATEMENT summarising the research and consultation outcomes, including ways to maximise positive and minimise negative impacts.

## Appendix 1 Government agency sources of data<sup>6</sup>

Source	Information available
<b>Leichhardt Council</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Leichhardt 2020 Community Strategic Plan</li> <li>- Social Plan</li> <li>- Population Projections</li> </ul>
<b>Australian Bureau of Statistics</b> <a href="http://www.abs.gov.au">www.abs.gov.au</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Census data (demographic, economic/employment, housing)</li> <li>- Manufacturing and retail censuses</li> <li>- Building and construction data</li> <li>- Economic and employment/unemployment data</li> <li>- Social trends data</li> <li>- Disability data</li> <li>- Victims of crime survey</li> <li>- Health data</li> <li>- Tourism data</li> </ul>
<b>NSW Government Agencies:</b> (All NSW government agency web sites can be accessed from the following web site: <a href="http://www.nsw.gov.au">www.nsw.gov.au</a> )	
<b>NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (Attorney General's Department)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Crime statistics for NSW and LGAs</li> <li>- Specialist crime data and comparative trend analysis</li> </ul>
<b>Department of Community Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supported accommodation information</li> <li>- Child abuse and domestic violence statistics</li> <li>- Childcare licence information</li> </ul>
<b>Department of Education and Training</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enrolments in government and private schools</li> <li>- Enrolment of special groups (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders; Non-English Speaking Background students)</li> </ul>
<b>Department of Fair Trading</b>	Rental Bond Board data (rents, type of dwellings)
<b>Department of Housing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Waiting list numbers</li> <li>- Client profiles</li> <li>- Housing stock information</li> <li>- Boarding house data</li> </ul>
<b>Department of Transport</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Passenger travel for all modes of transport (by traffic zones and statistical local areas)</li> <li>- Freight movement survey</li> <li>- Journey to work data</li> </ul>

<sup>6</sup> Based on information included in the Newcastle Social Impact Assessment for Development Applications, City of Newcastle

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- networks</li> </ul>
<b>Department of Planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Population projections (LGA and regions)</li> <li>- Demographic trend analyses</li> <li>- Urban Development Program (UDP) production data – new release areas</li> <li>- Metropolitan Urban Development Program (MUDP) production data – established areas</li> <li>- Employment Lands Development Program data</li> <li>- Housing data – quarterly <i>Rent and Sales Report</i></li> <li>- Regional housing statistics and market analysis</li> </ul>
<b>NSW Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In-patient statistics (Casemix)</li> <li>- Community health data</li> <li>- Hospital facility data</li> <li>- Waiting list information</li> <li>- Range of health indicators (eg mortality data)</li> <li>- Alcohol and drug dependency data</li> </ul>
<b>NSW Police Department</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mapped crime data by local area commands (available through local police stations)</li> <li>- Crime data</li> <li>- Annual customer satisfaction surveys (levels of reporting and police response)</li> </ul>
<b>Tourism New South Wales</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Visitor numbers (by country of origin)</li> <li>- Tourist expenditure data</li> <li>- Hotel/motel accommodation figures</li> </ul>
<b>Valuer General's Department</b>	Average house prices by type of dwelling and locality (based on a 'typical' sale not survey data)
<b>Australian Government Agencies</b>	
<b>Centrelink</b>	Number of persons on social security benefits
<b>Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs</b>	DEETYA Small Area Labour Market Quarterly Statistics (unemployment rates, labour force data)

**Appendix 2 Flow chart of steps involved in the social impact assessment process for Council officers**

