

Charters Towers Youth Strategy – Scoping Report

Presentation to the Youth Network NQ Inc –
Charters Towers Branch
20th May 2009



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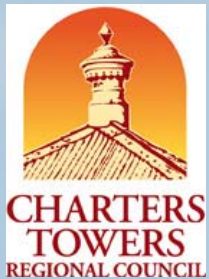
Aim of the Project



To inform Council's preparation of a Youth Strategy, for the Charters Towers Regional Council Local Government Area.

The scoping study included:

- A community profile.
- An overview of key issues for young people.
- A database of youth service providers.
- An analysis of service provision.
- A profile of youth spaces.
- An overview of emerging priorities.
- Identification of future directions and recommendations.



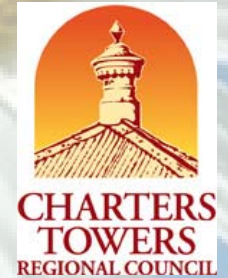
Methodology



- *Community Profile* – analysis of ABS 2006 Census data for the former local government boundaries of Dalrymple and Charters Towers.
- *Site Visit* - visits to Ravenswood, Pentland and Charters Towers, discussions with key stakeholders.
- *Mail-out Survey* – 74 surveys were administered by mail and email; 3 follow-up requests – 13 surveys returned.
- *Desktop Analysis* – a review of information gathered from site visits, search for relevant policy and planning documents, and the identification of service providers.



Key Findings: Community Profile



- **High proportion of young people:** The proportion of young people (aged 0-19 years) living in Charters Towers is well above the Queensland non-metropolitan benchmark. The proportion within Dalrymple is lower, however still above the Queensland non-metropolitan benchmark.
- **High proportion of Indigenous persons under the age of 24:** The number of Indigenous persons residing in the Charters Towers Regional Council is proportionately high in comparison with non-metropolitan Queensland. Of this population, over half are below the age of 24.
- **The former Dalrymple area to experience significant growth:** Population projections indicate that Charters Towers LGA is forecast to lose approximately 150 people over the next 20 years. Conversely the Dalrymple area is forecast to grow by approximately 1,200 residents, representing 41% growth in the region.

Key Findings: Community Profile Cont..



- **The population within the Charters Towers Region is ageing:** Both Charters Towers and Dalrymple will see a marked decrease in younger age groups, especially those in the 0-14 age group and the 15-44 year age group. Consistent with broader trends, the area will experience substantial growth in residents aged 65 years and above.
- **There is a high reliance on private transport:** The proportion of households that have three or more cars within Dalrymple (31.3%) is far higher than Charters Towers and the Queensland non-metropolitan average (16.5%).
- **Vocational occupations are prevalent in the former Dalrymple area, while occupations classified as professional are more prevalent in Charters Towers:** A high proportion of Dalrymple's labour force is employed as managers and as labourers, attributed to the prevalence of agriculture in the area. In comparison, Charters Towers has a relatively low proportion of managers and a high proportion of professionals.



Key Findings: Community Profile Cont..

- **Educational attainment is comparatively low:** In Dalrymple, a higher proportion of people reported that their highest level of education was year 10 than those that reported year 12, whereas in Charters Towers there was an equal proportion for each. This is not consistent with the non-metropolitan Queensland benchmark, where more people have a year 12 level education.
- **Many households in Dalrymple and Charters Towers are at risk of (or being impacted by) information isolation:** Both Dalrymple and Charters Towers have a high proportion of households with no internet connection (42.0% and 52.4% respectively) compared with the non-metropolitan Queensland average of 38.7%. (although recent Federal policy initiatives may alleviate this).



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Key Findings: Issues for Young People



Overall:

- 1st = Accessibility
- 2nd = Lack of organised recreational activities
- 3rd = Lack of social infrastructure
- 4th (equal) Place based image and identity
- 4th (equal) Disenfranchised youth
- 5th = Status of young people

Location Specific:

- Charters Towers - lack of social infrastructure.
- Pentland – accessibility.
- Ravenswood - lack of organised activities for youth.

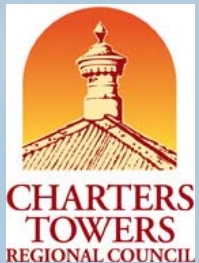


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Key Findings: Service Provision (From the Surveys)



- None were physically based in Greenvale or Ravenswood. One facility that hosted a visiting service was located in Pentland.
- Some services conducted outreach activities in Greenvale, Ravenswood, Pentland and Homestead. No further localities were identified by respondents, even though the survey instrument provided respondents with an opportunity to identify additional areas of service provision.
- Services were either based in Charters Towers (seven services) and Townsville (five services).
- Of respondents, none reported providing legal services.
- Most service provision provided counselling, outreach and support related services.
- Medical and health services had least geographical scope – although localities outside of Charters Towers are serviced by services such as the Royal Flying Doctors who specialise in providing support to geographically isolated populations.



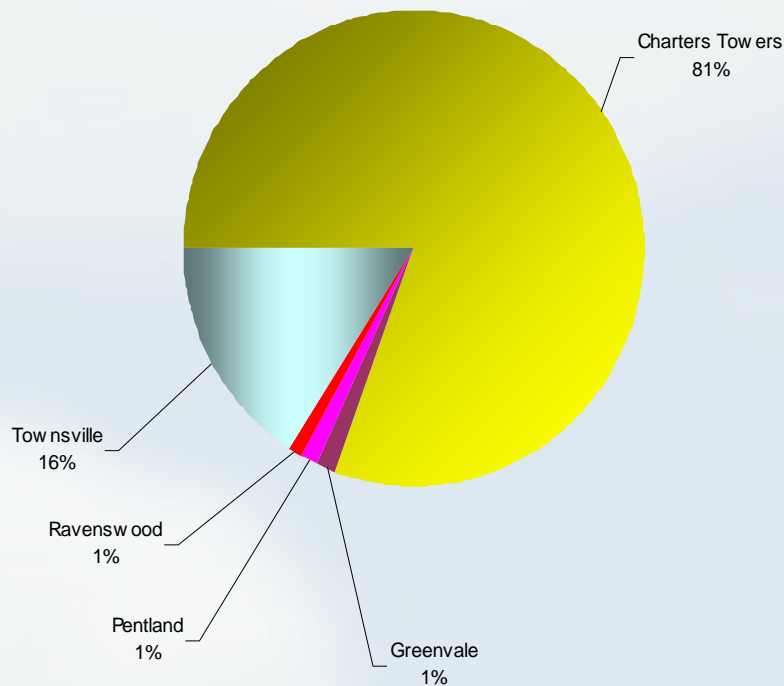
Key Findings: Service Provision (From the database)

Description	# Services/Facilities
Shared facility provided for the community	1
General community groups – relevant to a range of age groups	1
Community groups with a specific youth focus	7
Services/facilities relevant to culture and the arts	2
Education related service providers (non vocational specific focus)	13
Emergency services relevant to youth	1
Entertainment related services used by youth	2
Services with a particular focus on health/wellbeing	3
Services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons	2
Legal related service provision	3
Church	1
Restaurants used as informal youth meeting/congregation spaces	1
Groups with a specific focus or interest – for example writing groups	10
Sport and Recreational clubs or facilities	18
Support services operated by Government bodies	9
Support services operated by Non Government Organisations (NGO's)	10
Vocational education service providers	4
TOTAL	88

Key Findings: Service Provision (from the database)



Location of Services and Facilities



- Of services and facilities identified within the present study, most (81%), were located within Charters Towers itself.
- Approximately 16% of services operating within the Charters Towers Region are based in Townsville.



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Gaps in Service Provision



Responses recorded as per returned surveys:

“From playground equipment to water park areas to amusement areas. There are many gaps in our town, especially for 16-24 years”
(Sport and Recreation Club – Charters Towers)

“Poor advertising of clinics” (Women’s Health Clinic - Charters Towers)

“Information and consistency of availability and details of service providers” (Vocational Training and Career Support – Townsville)

“Lack of consistency with some visiting service providers and lack understanding and use of what already happens locally” (Tertiary Education and Workplace Training – Charters Towers)



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Gaps in Service Provision

Drug and Alcohol Referral Officers based in the community; Compulsory parenting programs for all sexually active individuals; Defensive driving program and training course; Incentives for trained youth to return to their local communities; Outdoor Education Centre in partnership with James Cook University for local and regional youth; Arts and Hospitality Training Centre; and Anti-smoking community strategy” (Secondary Education; Tertiary Education and Workplace Training; Sport and Recreation; Arts and Crafts; Music and Performing Arts; Financial; Housing; and Counselling, Outreach and Support – Charters Towers (also servicing Greenvale, Ravenswood, Pentland and Homestead)

“Emergency Housing/Shelter” (Charters Towers – Sport and Recreation)

“A central place for the sharing of information relevant to the needs of youth” (Charters Towers – Music and Performing Arts Group)



Key Findings: Emerging Priorities



Overall:

- 1st = Physical infrastructure
- 2nd = Enhanced information and communication
- 3rd = Specific projects
- 4th = Organised recreation and/or leisure activities
- 5th = Status of young people

Location Specific:

- Ravenswood - organised recreation and/or leisure activities
- Pentland - increased physical infrastructure
- Charters Towers – initiatives to facilitate joined up service delivery.



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Workshop Participant Comments



Physical infrastructure

- Installing active recreation facilities in existing spaces, including basketball hoops, playground facilities and a soccer net (stakeholder observation - Pentland).
- Installing embellishments to increase the amenity of recreational spaces including increased bathroom facilities, shading structures and barbeque facilities (stakeholder observation).
- Developing a high amenity community gathering space (stakeholder observation - Charters Towers).
- Multi-purpose paths for walking, bike riding and general leisure activity (stakeholder observation - Ravenswood).
- Creating a dedicated space for young people including facilities such as internet access and leisure activities for young people such as pool (stakeholder observation - Ravenswood).



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Workshop Participant Comments



Enhanced information and communication

- Creating a spatial database of youth services across the region. The project would be led by Council and outputs from this database could be disseminated to the community via Council's website and in booklet for distribution (stakeholder observation - Charters Towers).
- Maximising opportunities for joined up service delivery though the potential implementation of a hub and spoke model of service delivery for the region (stakeholder observation - Charters Towers).
- Enhancing communication with young people in the region through regular youth forums and virtual engagement strategies (youth run websites and discussion forums) (stakeholder observation - Charters Towers).
- Identifying linkages between Council services/facilities and community based programs (stakeholder observation - Charters Towers).



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Workshop Participant Comments



Specific Projects

- Developing projects for disengaged youth (stakeholder observation - Charters Towers).
- Creating a position to run a program to find jobs for disengaged youth (stakeholder observation - Charters Towers).
- Providing incentives for local employers (including Council) to take on disadvantaged youth for work experience (stakeholder observation - Charters Towers).
- Supporting funding applications (stakeholder observation - Charters Towers).
- Funding for more youth activities (stakeholder observation - Charters Towers).
- Providing a greater degree of financial support to fund a coordinator role that will assist in taking youth focussed organisations to the next level (stakeholder observation - Charters Towers).



Workshop Participant Comments



Status of Young People

- Developing a youth advisory group including senior council staff and identified representatives to manage activities (stakeholder observation - Charters Towers).
- Establishing a youth council that reports directly to Charters Towers Regional Council, ensuring a “good overall” representatives from youth – not just the “achievers” (stakeholder observation - Charters Towers).
- Building programs that reward recognise and profile young people within the community (stakeholder observation - Charters Towers).



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Future Directions and Recommendations



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Workshop Participant Comments



Organised recreation and/or leisure activities

- Organised youth music room and associated events (stakeholder observation - Charters Towers).
- Organised equestrian events including rodeo and pony club style events and coaching clinics for local riders (stakeholder observation - Ravenswood).
- Arts related events (arts, crafts and music) (stakeholder observation - Ravenswood).
- Blue Light Disco (stakeholder observation - Ravenswood).
- Movie Nights (stakeholder observation - Ravenswood).
- Team sports including soccer, cricket, volleyball and beach volleyball (stakeholder observation - Ravenswood).



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Direction 1 - Access



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Objective

- To improve access to relevant services and facilities in the Charters Towers Region.

Strategies/Recommendations

- Develop innovative approaches to intra-regional movement for young people.
- Support outreach services in targeting those outside of the major population centres.
- Increase operating hours of facilities by partnering with the community to operate and subsequently improve use of facilities (i.e. creation of a Pentland/Ravenswood swimming club and or pony club).
- Ensure that facilities are responsive to the climatic conditions in the region and adequate protection from the harsh elements is offered.
- Investigate opportunities to partner with education providers to maximise use of existing resources.
- Investigate opportunities to support local volunteers/organisations negotiate public liability requirements (for example provision of training).

Direction 2 – Information and Communication



Objective

- To improve communication and information sharing.

Strategies/Recommendations

- Develop a “hub and spoke” approach to youth service delivery in the area through the creation and support of a youth focussed taskforce or alliance with region and agency-wide representation.
- Identify regional ‘champions’ to drive the strategy forward in smaller areas – existing volunteer networks could be leveraged upon for this purpose.
- Identify funding opportunities to improve access to Information Communication Technologies (ICT) within the region – this may also be supported through targeted engagement with education providers.
- Creation of a detailed service directory to identify opportunities for joined up service delivery approaches within the region.



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Direction 3 – Engagement and Ownership



Objective

- To facilitate community wide engagement in and sense of ownership of youth related matters.

Strategies/Recommendations

- Engage youth in the decision making process, facilitating this interaction by using a variety of communication methods including face to face interaction (youth forums and advisory groups) and remote access methods (i.e. via School of the Air or social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace).
- Develop strategies to engage older populations in youth matters – an increase in the proportion of older populations increases opportunities for cross-generational interaction and knowledge sharing.
- Investigate opportunities to engage business operators and education providers in providing training and development opportunities for young people within the community.
- Create a community-wide shared vision for young people within the region.
- Foster ownership of spaces and places by engaging young people in place making activities such as public art activities.
- Engage Indigenous communities/organisations to develop strategies relevant to young Indigenous people.



Direction 4 – Celebration



Objective

- To celebrate the role that young people play within the community.

Strategies/Recommendations

- Identify opportunities for region-wide youth awards to celebrate the achievements of young people.
- Profile the achievements of young people within the community (past and present).
- Invigorate Council planning processes through increased interaction with and promotion of the value of young people in the region.



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