



Community Plan

2013-2015

Compiled by Jim Cavaye

December 2012



Disclaimer

Whilst all care and diligence have been exercised in the preparation of this report, Cavaye Community Development does not warrant the accuracy of the information contained within and accepts no liability for any loss or damage that may be suffered as a result of reliance on this information, whether or not there has been any error, omission or negligence on the part of Cavaye Community Development or its employees. Any priorities, forecasts or projections used in the report can be affected by a number of unforeseen variables, and as such no warranty is given that a particular set of results will in fact be achieved.

Community Plan 2013-2015

Barcaldine Regional Council

Contents

Abbreviations.....	5
Message from the Mayor	6
The Barcaldine Region	7
Development of the Community Plan.....	8
ALPHA AND DISTRICT.....	9
Assets	9
Preferred Future	10
Key Achievements 2009-2012.....	11
Health and Wellbeing	18
Infrastructure and Facilities	19
Managing Mining Development.....	20
Business and Tourism	21
Youth.....	22
Seniors.....	23
Streetscape and Amenity.....	23
Sport and Recreation.....	23
Education	24
Community Identity and Engagement	24
ARAMAC AND DISTRICT	25
Assets	25
Preferred Future	26
Key Achievements 2009-2012.....	26
Health and Well-Being	33
Aged Care	33
Population, Employment, Services	34
Infrastructure and Facilities	34
Youth.....	35
Business and Tourism	35
Child Care and Kindergarten	37
Streetscape and Amenity.....	37
Community Identity, Engagement and Collaboration	38
BARCALDINE AND DISTRICT	40
Assets	40
Preferred Future	41
Key Achievements 2009-2012.....	41
Health and Well-Being	51
Aged Care	52
Child Care and Kindergarten	53
Infrastructure and Facilities	53
Business	54
Tourism.....	55
Primary Industries.....	55
Arts and Culture.....	56
Education	57

Environment.....	58
Youth.....	58
Seniors.....	59
JERICHO AND DISTRICT	61
Assets	61
Preferred Future	62
Key Achievements 2009-2012.....	63
Health and Well being	68
Preparation for Mining Development	69
Infrastructure.....	70
Community Facilities.....	71
Business and Employment.....	71
MUTTABURRA AND DISTRICT	73
Assets	73
Preferred Future	74
Key Achievements 2009-2012.....	74
Health and Well Being.....	82
Infrastructure and Facilities	82
Business	84
Tourism.....	85
Education	86
Streetscape and Amenity.....	86
Children and Youth.....	87
Progressing the Community Plan.....	89

Abbreviations

AACC	Australian Agricultural College Corporation
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACAG	Alpha Community Action Group
ACDA	Aramac Community Development Association
BNA	Bush Nurses Association
BRE	Barcaldine Business Retention and Expansion Group
BRC	Barcaldine Regional Council
BRCA	Barcaldine Regional Council Area
CAN	Community Advisory Network
DETE	Department of Education, Training and Employment
DEHP	Department of Environment and Heritage Protection
DSDIP	Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning
DNRM	Department of Natural Resources and Mines
DHA	Department of Health and Ageing (Commonwealth)
DTMR	Department of Transport and Main Roads
DCCSDS	Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services,
EMQ	Emergency Management Queensland
GP	General Practitioner
HACC	Home and Community Care
JCAG	Jericho Community Action Group
LRC	Longreach Regional Council
NRM	Natural Resource Management
MCDA	Mttaburra Community Development Association
OESR	Office of Economic and Statistical Research
PCYC	Police Citizens Youth Club
PHC	Primary Healthcare Centre
PIFU	Planning Information and Forecasting Unit, Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning
QAS	Queensland Ambulance Service
QGAP	Queensland Government Agent Program
QH	Queensland Health
QPS	Queensland Police Service
RADF	Regional Arts Development Fund
RFDS	Royal Flying Doctor Service
RTC	Rural Transaction Centre
SES	State Emergency Service
TAFE	Technical and Further Education

Message from the Mayor

Taking advantage of opportunities and managing challenges in the Barcaldine region requires a comprehensive plan based on the needs and issues of residents. In late 2009, Barcaldine Regional Council worked with local residents to develop exactly that - a community plan to better guide decisions and investment, provide a common set of priorities for the region and mobilise a range of service providers.

The plan included the five main communities and their surroundings districts and described a wide range of actions identified by community members. Many of these actions required effort and investment by many organisations including local, state and federal government, the private sector, community organisations and residents.

Many actions fell outside the role of local government, and funds are limited for all organisations but the Council coordinated and lobbied to help follow up on actions. Three years on, progress has been made with many actions and it is timely to review the plan, talk again with local people and develop further actions.

This revised version of the community plan describes progress with actions and plans further work through until 2015. Implementing these actions will again require effort by many groups and progress will depend on obtaining scarce funding. However, Council is enthusiastic about playing its role in fostering the prosperity, environment and social vitality of the region.

Cr Rob Chandler
Mayor, Barcaldine Regional Council

The Barcaldine Region

Barcaldine Regional Council Area in central western Queensland includes the towns of Barcaldine, Alpha, Aramac, Jericho and Muttaborra and an extensive rural area (figure 1).

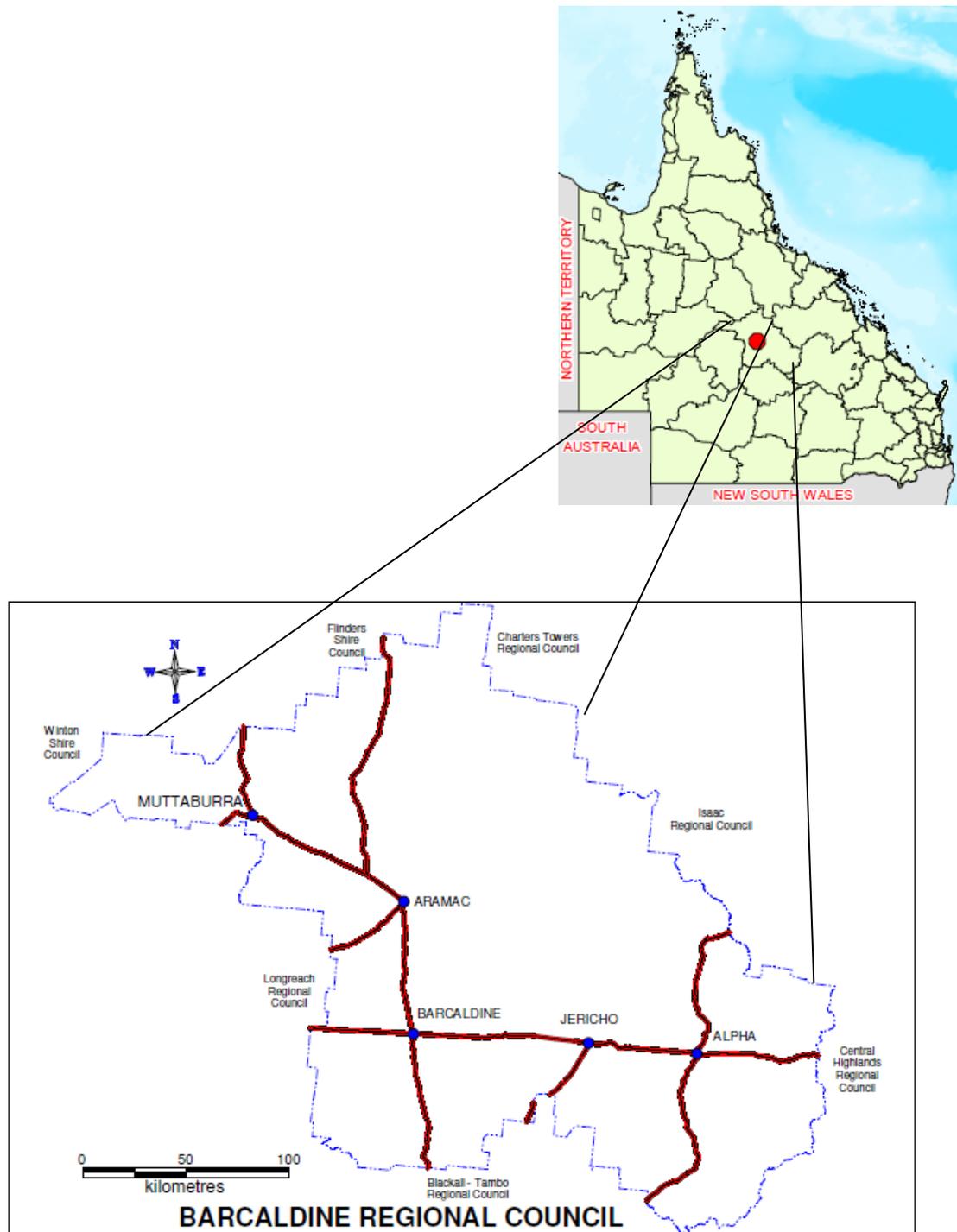


Figure 1. The Barcaldine Regional Council Area.

Development of the Community Plan

The Community Plan was developed using the following steps:

1. **Assets:** Identifying community assets and what people value about living in the region,
2. **Preferred Future:** A description of how residents want the region to be,
3. **Opportunities and Challenges:** The issues residents see for the region,
4. **Actions:** Strategies and actions to be implemented to achieve the preferred future.

Community Engagement

The Community Plan involved residents in the following events in each of the communities in the region – Barcaldine, Alpha, Jericho, Aramac and Muttaborra:

- Sector forums on the issues for particular sectors such as seniors, youth etc.
- Discussions with key community members and organisations,
- Open community forums,
- Feedback forms filled out by residents,
- Discussions with Council staff.

Updating the plan involved personal discussions with key people in communities and two open meetings in each of the communities in the region. Feedback forums were also held in each community when both the original and updated versions of the plans were drafted.

The following sections of the plan describe the assets, vision, achievements and future actions for each of the communities in the region and their surrounding districts.

ALPHA AND DISTRICT

Assets

Lifestyle

Alpha and district has a lifestyle that is safe, comfortable and ideally suited to families. People enjoy an easy-going small community lifestyle with basic services and facilities.

Community Involvement and Social Networks

People know each other and support the community strongly. It is a friendly community where people have relatives living nearby and where people care for each other. In the small population, people are encouraged to participate in the community and many people support small community organisations.

Business

Alpha has a good small shopping centre with shops that other communities the same size haven't got. There are opportunities for employment but these are limited.

Health Care

People strongly value health care services, particularly the local hospital and HACC service. Alpha has a strong community oriented hospital with caring staff where the standard of emergency care is high and personal. Staff at the hospital know local residents and HACC services are easily accessible. Other assets were:

- RFDS coverage,
- Visiting doctors,
- Hospital runs a public pharmacy and delivery services,
- The patient transport service provides subsidised transport to other centres.

Safety

The community is virtually crime free and residents mostly know each other and look after each other. Police are well known and integrated into the community. Children can be brought up in a safe and secure environment.

Family Oriented

Residents see the community as a great place to raise children. The community was family-orientated and appeals strongly to families.

Environment

The cleanliness of the town and district was valued by residents. People enjoyed neat streets and a clean environment.

Sport and Recreation

Young people, in particular, value local sport including touch football, rugby league and cricket. They appreciate their coaches and other adults who developed and supported their sporting opportunities.

Facilities

Community facilities include walking tracks, the library, skate park and swimming pool.

Education

A good education up to year 10 is available with school functions and activities.

Preferred Future

The future that residents see for Alpha and District in 2020 is:

- Increased population,
- Greater local employment opportunities,
- The maintenance of current services (at the very least) and the expansion of services particularly improved health and education services,
- Proactive investment in basic but modern infrastructure to support a growing population such as sewerage and a reliable power supply,
- Retaining caring community values and the lifestyle of a sustainable small community,
- Developing the coal and coal seam gas industries but where mining staff are integrated into the community and environmental and social impacts are minimal,
- Maintaining and supporting the existing beef industry,
- The Council remaining viable and active with offices and employment retained in Alpha and other communities,
- Having an optimistic mindset about the opportunities offered by small rural communities.

Key Achievements 2009-2012

The main actions in the 2009-2012 Community Plan that have been achieved are:

- The Fordham Park racecourse has been upgraded through voluntary effort and Council support. This has included installation of irrigation and improvements to buildings,
- Upgrading of the showgrounds to include sporting facilities and improved amenities,
- Improved streetscape and community facilities in the main street as a result of the Alpha Master Plan,
- The maintenance of an ambulance service with a QAS vehicle, hospital nurse and volunteer drivers,
- Lobbying that contributed to the increase in the transport and accommodation rates of the Patient Transport Scheme,
- The development of a Council plan for sport and recreation,
- The installation of two flood stations with two more to be established,
- Improvements to the Alpha cemetery including an avenue of trees,
- Meals on Wheels services have been maintained. The service is operated by HACC, auspiced by the Council and staffed by volunteers,
- Ongoing planning and lobbying for funding for the connection of sewerage,
- The appearance and neatness of public land has improved,
- A barbecue and picnic table with shade has been established at Settlers Park. The park has been “greened” with increased watering,
- The HACC building has been renovated and the coordination of the service is going to be combined with Jericho,
- General upgrades of streets and roads including kerbing and channelling,
- The development of residential land,
- A license has been obtained to re-broadcast digital T.V.

ALPHA AND DISTRICT – HIGHEST PRIORITY ACTIONS 2013-2015

Actions	Status	Timeframe	Prime Responsibility	Partners
Health and Well Being				
Clarify Central West Health and Hospital Board (in conjunction with North West Primary Health Care and the Medicare Local) plans for health service delivery in the region, and lobby for a permanent resident doctor position.	Ongoing negotiations are being held between BRC and Central West Health and Hospital Board (in conjunction with North West Primary Health Care and the Medicare Local)	S	Central West Health and Hospital Board (in conjunction with North West Primary Health Care and the Medicare Local)	Local Health Group
Lobby to arrange for Emerald Hospital to be a receiving hospital for Alpha patients (rather than Barcaldine and Longreach)	New	S	Central West Health and Hospital Board (in conjunction with North West Primary Health Care and the Medicare Local)	BRC
Lobby for an improved public dental service	New	M	Central West Health and Hospital Board (in conjunction with North West Primary Health Care and the Medicare Local)	BRC

Timeframe: S, Short term (within 12 months); M, Medium term (1-2 years); L, Long term (2-5 years).

Prime responsibility: The organisation that could be approached to possibly lead or facilitate the strategy or action

Partners: Organisations that could support the implementation of the strategy or action

Actions	Status	Timeframe	Prime Responsibility	Partners
Liaise with mining companies to explore options for medical personnel to be available for the broader community	New	M	Mining companies	Central West Health and Hospital Board (in conjunction with North West Primary Health Care and the Medicare Local)
Infrastructure and Facilities				
Continue to lobby to seal and upgrade the Clermont to Tambo road via Alpha	Progressing	L	BRC	DTMR
Continue the road maintenance program and if possible, increase resourcing	Progressing	S	BRC	DTMR
Progress the installation of sewerage in Alpha	Under investigation, subject to integrated planning and mine development	S-M	BRC	DSDIP
Continue to lobby Ergon Energy to improve the reliability of power supply	Reliability has improved but lobbying is continuing	S	BRC	
Install equipment to re-broadcast digital TV	New	S	BRC	
Continue to implement the flood mitigation strategy	Progressing	S	BRC	

ALPHA AND DISTRICT – HIGHEST PRIORITY ACTIONS 2013-2015

Actions	Status	Timeframe	Prime Responsibility	Partners
Managing Mining Development				
Maintain contact with mining companies and be proactive about managing the impacts and benefits of mining	Progressing	S-M	BRC	Community Organisations
Offer training and support to help businesses become “tender ready”	New	M	DSDIP	Local businesses
Maintain town plans to ensure that available zoning and housing is available for possible population increase	New	S	BRC	DSDIP, DHPW
Business and Tourism				
Council and businesses to maintain and, if possible, increase the number of traineeships and apprenticeships	Council apprenticeships have remained stable	M	BRC	
Council to maintain workforce numbers	Ongoing	M	BRC	
Investigate options for greater TAFE training including a “hands on” facility in Alpha	New	M	TAFE	Mining companies
Improve the Alpha and Pine Hill cemeteries as tourism assets	Progressing - Alpha cemetery has been improved	S	BRC	Alpha Tourism Association
Develop and promote self-drive tours	Ongoing	M	Alpha Tourism Association	Local businesses

ALPHA AND DISTRICT – HIGHEST PRIORITY ACTIONS 2013-2015

Actions	Status	Timeframe	Prime Responsibility	Partners
Youth				
Develop more activities for young people, particularly on weekends.	Ongoing	S	Young people, Community volunteers	BRC
Investigate the establishment of a youth centre that could be a safe drop-in venue for young people.	Ongoing	S-M	Young people, Community volunteers	BRC
Seniors				
Maintain, and improve HACC services and MPHS residential aged care places.	Ongoing	S	HACC, MPHS and other service providers	BRC
Continue to lobby Central West Health and Hospital Board (in conjunction with North West Primary Health Care and the Medicare Local) to improve facilities to increase aged care places	Ongoing	M	CAN	Seniors
Streetscape and Amenity				
Improve vehicle stops in the main street	Progressed through the implementation of the Master Plan.	S	BRC	Local businesses
Work with businesses to beautify the main street		S	BRC	Local businesses
Upgrade and extend footpaths with a level, safe footpath in the main street		S	BRC	
Extend kerbing and channelling		M	BRC	
Council to organise/enforce clean up on private land	Progressing	S	BRC	

ALPHA AND DISTRICT – HIGHEST PRIORITY ACTIONS 2013-2015

Actions	Status	Timeframe	Prime Responsibility	Partners
Sport and Recreation				
Continue with the upgrade of the showgrounds as a combined show/sporting facility	Progressing	S-M	Showgrounds Committee	BRC
Continue with the upgrade of the racecourse	Progressing	S-M	Community volunteers	BRC
Investigate the possibility of rationalising sporting facilities for ease of management and maintenance	This is part of the Council Plan for Sport and Recreation	M	Sporting groups	BRC
Continue to investigate options for the installation of a 50m swimming pool	Ongoing	S-M	BRC	Community organisations

ALPHA AND DISTRICT – LOWER PRIORITY ACTIONS 2013-2015

Actions	Status	Timeframe	Prime Responsibility	Partners
Review the collection of health care statistics and work with Central West Health and Hospital Board (in conjunction with North West Primary Health Care and the Medicare Local) to develop ways of more accurately gathering statistics for Alpha and other communities	New	S	Central West Health and Hospital Board (in conjunction with North West Primary Health Care and the Medicare Local)	BRC
Negotiate with businesses to stock more items suited to young people.	Ongoing	S	Young people	Local businesses

ACTIONS FROM 2009 THAT HAVE BEEN DISCONTINUED

Action	Reasons for being discontinued
Continue to lobby Queensland government about the impact of tree clearing legislation	Legislation about the control of regrowth has been relaxed. Industry organisations continue to monitor the situation
Continue to lobby Queensland Rail to allowing loading of cattle at smaller communities between Emerald and Longreach and improve freight and passenger services	QR policies and business model, and industry economics make this action unviable. Facilities are not appropriate for loading and holding of livestock.
Negotiate improved access to “The Palace” and foster the development of organised tours to the site.	Private landholders are concerned about fire, litter and other issues that would come from tourist access. Indigenous people are concerned about preserving the site and avoiding any possible damage to the site.
Facilitate local businesses to identify and implement actions to maintain viability. This may include access to information, business support etc.	Not seen as a priority for business

Health and Wellbeing

Doctor

The major issue is the lack of a permanent local doctor in Alpha. The community has visiting doctors that, while welcome, do not provide the continuity of care that a resident doctor would provide. The consequences of this are:

- Lack of continuity of care leading to duplication of tests and examinations of patients,
- Limited care for the large elderly population and inability to manage chronic illness,
- Many people are transferred to hospitals in Barcaldine, Longreach or Rockhampton where they have little family or other personal support,
- The hospital intake for Alpha is Longreach rather than Emerald which means patients travel west to small communities rather than east to larger centres,
- Without a doctor, it is difficult to attract and retain qualified permanent nursing staff. Contract nurses are expensive and high turnover reduces the continuity of care.
- Without a resident doctor, the community is unattractive to new residents particularly families and older people.

The way health care statistics are gathered makes it difficult to justify a doctor. Local patient care statistics are not high largely due to people having to be transferred to other centres. People involved in mining exploration are not included in the health care statistics and only the town population is considered in justifying funding rather than the rural area as well.

A possible reduction in on-call periods from 6 weeks to 4 weeks would make a position more attractive. Open dialogue with the state government needs to continue to present a case for funding for a doctor.

Potential economic development from the minerals industry may increase the population to justify a doctor. Mining companies usually have their own medical staff to take the burden off local medical services. However, Alpha wants the opposite to happen – to have miners and contractors use local medical services to better justify a permanent doctor.

Allied Health Services

There are occasional visiting allied health services and health promotion programs such as “Lighten Up” are not popular.

A public dentist visits the community approximately every 3 months in a van. This is a valuable service but residents need greater access to public dental services.

HACC Services

Home and Community Care (HACC) provides an important in-home health and aged care service. Residents find it affordable and accessible and it reduces the number of people who require hospital attention. It also provides social support particularly where people have little or no family support. Many people have a strong relationship with HACC service providers. This service is becoming more important with an ageing population and more specialized services are required such as Dementia care.

Patient Transport Scheme

The Patient Transport Scheme is also an important service allowing people to affordably travel to access more specialized medical attention. Lobbying for many years has led the Queensland Government to increase the subsidy available for transport and accommodation. A transport service is provided by the HACC bus for people requiring transport to Emerald or Barcaldine.

Other key health care issues are:

- Improved access to children's' health services,
- Increased health promotion and illness and accident prevention,
- Improved access to day respite care in the district.

Infrastructure and Facilities

People wanted to retain and maintain existing infrastructure and make key improvements based on available funding.

Roads

People wanted to see local roads well maintained and upgraded where possible. A priority for upgrading is the road from Clermont to Tambo via Alpha and this is progressing. This was seen as a potentially important route that would improve tourist access from the north and south, substantially reduce travel times for trucks and be a strategic investment in the overall Queensland road network.

Water and Sewerage

A high priority is the installation of sewerage in Alpha. Barcaldine Regional Council is continuing to develop an integrated plan and applying for funding for this.

Alpha has an existing water supply from a sub-artesian basin but it is limited. Residents suggested investigating the possibility of mines providing beneficial reuse water for the town.

Power

The current power supply is unreliable largely due to the age of the power lines, weather and debris affecting distribution lines. A reliable power supply is a high priority for

residents and to support business and industry investment. Negotiations are continuing with Ergon energy about upgrading power infrastructure.

Broadband

The National Broadband Network will be installed but the town will not be connected to the cable. Lobbying is continuing about this and a possible alternative is improved wireless access.

Digital TV

Council has obtained a license to re-broadcast digital TV and now is looking to install equipment to allow for re-broadcasting.

Managing Mining Development

The Hancock GVK, Hancock Prospecting, AMCI, Vale and Waratah Coal mines are developing in the district. This offers opportunities in direct employment with the mines and through contractors providing services. However, residents are also concerned about the potential social and environmental impacts of mining. Maintaining social cohesion, and minimising environmental impacts, particularly protecting existing nature refuges and areas of remnant vegetation are concerns. Alpha is being portrayed as a potential “boom town” and the community needs to be prepared for real estate speculation. The Council is maintaining close communication with companies and residents are looking to be closely engaged.

Residents welcomed this development but stressed that it needed to be managed to avoid becoming a “mining town” that could threaten the values and lifestyle of the community.

It is crucial that local business become “tender ready” for the mining sector. Mining companies will have “local content” policies but businesses will need to meet health and safety, governance, insurance and quality assurance standards. This will require formal systems and procedures and documented evidence of compliance. While this will not suit all businesses, it is important that businesses know what is required and have support to meet the standards if they want to benefit as much as possible from mining investment. Close liaison is needed with mining companies and greater access is needed to information and business support services both remotely and at the face to face level.

Trades

There is an opportunity to encourage tradespeople to establish a business. Mining will have a major impact on this but every opportunity should be developed for local people to access a trade traineeship or apprenticeship. An Information Technology Academy has been established at the school on-line. However, but more “hands on” training is needed locally such as a shed at the school for training. This will help retain students for years 8, 9 and 10 and for years 11 and 12 in the long term.

Business and Tourism

Long term employment is needed to retain and expand the population and services. Alpha has very little career-entry employment. The beef industry, as the major industry in the district, has substantially reduced employment due to drought and narrow margins. Many properties rely on family and contract labour. Lack of local employment means that young people often need to leave the district and they can lose their connection with it.

Economic diversification is also important with tourism, services and mining adding to economic base of the beef industry.

Small Business

Residents wanted to see all local businesses operating well and being profitable and sustainable. They particularly wanted to see a full set of shops open in the main shopping area.

It is important to maintain an ethic of shopping locally and to have small businesses look at opportunities to service the broader central west region. Grey Nomads are an important market and some businesses are well known in this sector.

Value Adding

There are limited opportunities to value add to agriculture and other industries. The high cost of entry, and limited margins make value adding options unviable. However, there is interest in developing a “kill only” abattoir and transporting chilled carcasses to Rockhampton.

Incentives

Many people recognised that there were substantial barriers to establishing a business in a somewhat remote rural area. Existing incentives need to be fully explored and Council should consider encouraging economic development by helping businesses access information, lobbying for economic development incentives and considering the establishment of an economic development officer position.

Primary Industry

The beef industry remains the economic mainstay of the community although mining is developing. It has been subject to drought, reduced margins and legislative changes. Lobbying has lead to some relaxation of restrictions on re-growth clearing and control. Suggestions have been made to lobby for a resident stock inspector in Alpha, and to allow cattle to be loaded onto rail in smaller communities. Neither of these suggestions are likely to be feasible.

Freight

Freight services were seen as expensive and unreliable and there is a need for better freight services and improved use of the airport for services linked to major towns.

Tourism

Tourism assets are the Jump-Up, town murals, Grey Nomads, the Angel Flight concert, the Visitor Information Centre (staffed by volunteers) and the Spirit of the Outback which stops in the town. The old cemetery has been improved as a tourism asset. Apart from this, there are limited local attractions and activities to support tourism. Alpha is between the Gemfields and the outback and considered a stop rather than a destination in itself. There was also little tourist promotion. "The Palace" is on private land and it is unlikely that this will be available for public access. It is important to manage the issue of providing camping but also supporting local caravan park businesses.

Opportunities to encourage tourism are:

- Developing guided tours for tourists from the train,
- Developing self drive tours and four wheel drive tours,
- Fishing at George's Hole,
- Establishing farmstays,
- Fossicking for petrified wood,
- Improving roads to support tourism.

Youth

The town and district offers a good lifestyle for young children but there were limited opportunities for teenagers and young adults. Students in years 11 and 12 either have to travel to Barcaldine for school or attend boarding school. This is often a point where families leave the community to access education for children. After sport on Saturdays there are very few activities for young people. Very limited employment means that many young people leave Alpha and few return and employment offered by mining is a major opportunity.

Suggestions to improve the community for young people are:

- Improved sporting facilities. A wide range of sport is available and many young people play sport but there needs to be more grass on the fields, more shade available at sporting venues, installing a water tank at the skate park and establishing a gym.
- More activities for young people, particularly on weekends. While young people do make their own fun, there are not many young people in the community to develop something different to do. More activities and events in Alpha would reduce the need to travel to larger centres.
- A youth centre that could be a safe drop-in venue for young people.

- A greater variety of shops would make the community more suited to young people. While local shops stock some “young” items, a food business, a hairdresser and young person’s clothes shop would improve the community.

Seniors

Seniors felt that the community was friendly and comfortable with many people having family and community support. Aged care services are relatively good with services allowing the elderly to remain in their own town with their family. There is a multipurpose aged care centre at the hospital but limited to four places. HACC provides in-home care, outings, mobility equipment etc. Home assist services are available from Barcaldine and the hospital is accessible.

However, there are several challenges. Not having a permanent doctor limits the health care that can be provided locally and aged people need to travel to larger centres for more than basic medical care. Only one person does aged care assessments and there is a long waiting period.

Seniors felt that it would be good for older people to interact with others in Jericho and Barcaldine and arranging bus transport for visits would be beneficial. They also sought more functions to involve older people.

Streetscape and Amenity

The streetscape has been improved substantially as part of a town masterplan to manage flooding. Vehicle stops are being removed, footpaths are being improved in the main street and elsewhere, and there is improved signage and beautification.

Other suggestions for improvement are:

- Owners improving the appearance of private premises such as having more fresh paint in the main shopping street.
- Council should aim to kerb and channel all streets with footpaths where appropriate.
- More walking paths and tracks are needed in parks with adequate shade and BBQ’s. A barbecue and picnic table needs to be installed at the Belyando Crossing on the Capricorn Highway.
- “louder” signage is needed to support local services and businesses,
- maintenance of parks and gardens

Sport and Recreation

Alpha and district has many sporting options for a community its size including rugby league, touch football, tennis, cricket, the swimming pool and camp-drafting. However, sporting facilities are limited and often sportspeople have to travel long distances on weekends to compete.

The showgrounds are being upgraded by a community effort with Council support. It will be a multi-purpose community centre/sport facility. The upgrade has included stock-proof fencing and a kitchen renovation. Other suggested improvements are:

- More competition sports and sports carnivals,
- Heating of the swimming pool.

Education

The current P10 school was strongly valued in the community. However, people also recognised that local education was limited. The school has a restricted curriculum and students cannot access year 11 and 12 locally. Boarding school is expensive and disrupts family life. Young people also have to make social adjustments in larger settings. Many people saw the need for greater educational choice but increased student numbers depend on industry, employment and population.

A district relief teacher is needed. Teachers have no relief locally and a relief teacher need to come from Barcaldine or Longreach. The school has after school care and special education facilities and a play group is being established.

Community Identity and Engagement

The community has a strong identity and people are committed to maintaining and enhancing the town and district. People wanted to maintain community representation in decision making and keep decisions local. They wanted to maintain the local Council office and services which was important to the identity, economy and participation of the community with the Council. The Alpha Community Action Group has not been active for some time.

Housing

Alpha has many vacant houses but they are not available for rental. Houses were purchased relatively cheaply and owners can afford to have them vacant. Some speculation is occurring with regard to a possible mining “boom”.

Flood Mitigation

A major study of flood dynamics has been carried out in all flood prone communities in the Regional Council area. Planning controls in Alpha limit development in flood prone areas and measures such as flood warning systems are being considered. Some residents emphasised the need to clear the creek of vegetation to reduce the flood risk.

Arts and Culture

Council has developed a major Arts Plan for the region. Junior arts and music and dance teaching are available locally. Plans for more art experiences need to be implemented, particularly for young people.

ARAMAC AND DISTRICT

Assets

Lifestyle

Aramac and district provides a quiet rural affordable lifestyle. The community is ideal for families and a great place to bring up children.

Community Involvement and Social Networks

People are very friendly and there is a strong sense of community where people get involved in supporting the town and district. Community effort is appreciated and people are resilient with a lot of common sense.

Health Care

People strongly value local health care services.

Safety

The community is very safe, particularly for children.

Environment

People appreciate the well maintained parks in town and Lake Dunn is a major asset for both tourists and local people. The town is clean and tidy.

Sport and Recreation

There are many sport and recreation opportunities and facilities particularly the bowls club and pony club.

Facilities

There are many services and facilities including the Rural Transaction Centre (RTC) and QGAP (Queensland Government Agent Program) office. Residents can access Medicare and Centrelink locally at the RTC. Other facilities are the swimming pool, the library and Council's provision of affordable housing.

Education

The school provides education to year 10 locally.

Affordable

The cost of living is affordable, particularly rent.

Preferred Future

The future that residents saw for Aramac and District in 2020 is:

- Sustaining the population of the town at 350-400,
- Maintaining the current level of services i.e. to not lose any services and expand them if possible,
- Maintaining employment (Council is the main employer),
- Maintaining small businesses and retail choices. People wanted to see businesses retained and profitable with more shops and basic services available in the future.
- The town would remain clean and tidy with grass being regularly mown and no rubbish on public or private property.
- Reduced vandalism and disturbance by motorbikes.
- Parks and gardens would be expanded and well maintained.
- More activities would be available for young people. They would have broader horizons with an awareness of opportunities “outside the town grids”.
- Education opportunities would be expanded with children accessing high school with good subject and career choices.
- A sense of pride in the community would be maintained and it would be clearly evident.
- The community would be more environmentally sustainable including solar power and more vegetable growing.

Key Achievements 2009-2012

The main actions in the 2009-2012 Community Plan that have been achieved are:

- The establishment of a skate park,
- Production of a tourism brochure,
- Completion of the Harry Redford Centre and bowls club,
- A new amenities block at Lake Dunn,
- Upgrading of lighting at the showgrounds,
- Establishment of the PHC (after the closure of the hospital),
- Establishment of a medical centre building,
- A new ambulance centre,
- Installation of kerbing and channelling,
- The museum committee has re-formed,
- A new Council house has been built,
- Completion of a second stage of four aged care units,
- Fencing of the airport,
- Improved road alignments, general road upgrades and construction of bridges,
- Clarification of the landing of RFDS aircraft at Aramac,
- The provision of two additional computers at the library,
- ACDA has organised access to the gym,
- Installation of town welcome signs.

ARAMAC AND DISTRICT – HIGHEST PRIORITY ACTIONS 2013-2015

Actions	Status	Timeframe	Prime Responsibility	Partners
Health and Well Being				
Lobby for re-opening of the hospital and the return of a permanent doctor	Ongoing	S-M	ACDA	BRC
Negotiate an appropriate medical service for the community such as an integrated PHC with aged care and other services (The hospital has closed and is now a PHC)	New	S	Central West Health and Hospital Board (in conjunction with North West Primary Health Care and the Medicare Local)	BRC, ACDA
Lobby Central West Health and Hospital Board (in conjunction with North West Primary Health Care and the Medicare Local) for more frequent visits by visiting health professionals	New	S	Central West Health and Hospital Board (in conjunction with North West Primary Health Care and the Medicare Local)	ACDA, BRC
Investigate options for a medical/rescue helicopter service for central western Queensland with appropriate staffing arrangements	Ongoing	M	Central West Health and Hospital Board, EMQ	BRC
Maintain close contact with the Central West Health and Hospital Board, North West Primary Health Care, the Medicare Local and the RFDS in relation to health services	New	S-M	BRC	Local health groups

Timeframe: S, Short term (within 12 months); M, Medium term (1-2 years); L, Long term (2-5 years).

Prime responsibility: The organisation that could be approached to possibly lead or facilitate the strategy or action

Partners: Organisations that could support the implementation of the strategy or action

ARAMAC AND DISTRICT – HIGHEST PRIORITY ACTIONS 2013-2015

Actions	Status	Timeframe	Prime Responsibility	Partners
Lobby QAS to retain the 2 ambulance officers in Aramac	New	S-M	BRC	QAS
Infrastructure and Facilities				
Widen the road from Aramac to Barcaldine	Ongoing	L	BRC	DTMR
Extend the sealing of local roads and the sheeting of local roads as part of the road strategic plan	Ongoing	S-L	BRC	DTMR
Lobby Ergon Energy to improve the reliability of power supply and preventing brown outs	New	S-M	BRC	Ergon Energy
Replace the swimming pool with an aquatic centre incorporating shade over the pool surrounds	Ongoing	S-M	BRC	ACDA
Upgrade facilities at Aramac Caravan Park	Ongoing	S	BRC	ACDA
Lobby Flinders Shire Council and DTMR to complete the upgrade the Torrens Creek Road	Progressing	M	BRC	Flinders Shire Council, DTMR
Establish industrial blocks in an appropriate area to support light industries	Progressing	M	BRC	
Investigate broadband options with regard to the NBN	New	S-M	BRC	NBN Co.
Install a viewing screen at the Tramway Museum and a shed for people to walk around the exhibits	New	S	Tramway Museum Committee	BRC
Upgrade facilities at the showgrounds	Progressing	S	BRC	Showgrounds Committee

ARAMAC AND DISTRICT – HIGHEST PRIORITY ACTIONS 2013-2015

Actions	Status	Timeframe	Prime Responsibility	Partners
Youth				
Support ACDA in developing more after-school and school holiday sport and activities	Progressing	S	ACDA	Young people, parents, BRC
Support the Youth Council to help organise youth activities and provide a youth voice in the community	Ongoing	M	Young people	BRC, Aramac School
Learn to swim program	New	S	BRC	Education Queensland
Education				
Engage the community in using the school technology centre for training, activities etc. Build a stronger relationship between the school and community such as technology days, training activities, displays and demonstrations	New	M	Aramac School	ACDA, Community organisations
Business and Tourism				
Support the Tramway Museum Committee in improving the museum and visitor facilities	New	M	Local businesses	DEEDI
Move the Visitor Information Centre from the Council office to an appropriate location that can be open outside hours	New	S	BRC	Outback Tourism Association
Seek funding for a part-time Tourism Officer position	A Council officer currently is performing the role of tourism development	S-M	BRC	Outback Tourism Association

ARAMAC AND DISTRICT – HIGHEST PRIORITY ACTIONS 2013-2015

Actions	Status	Timeframe	Prime Responsibility	Partners
Business and Tourism cont'd				
Liaise with business to progress ways to have fuel available more regularly.	New	M	ACDA	BRC
Improve tourism promotion as part of an overall tourism marketing plan	Progressing	S	BRC	ACDA
Improve signage to tourism attractions. Upgrade and have consistent town signage.	Progressing	S	BRC	ACDA
Council, and other employers, to maintain work experience and apprenticeships	Ongoing	S-M	BRC	Education Queensland, TAFE
Ongoing support for the Harry Redford Cattle Drive	Ongoing	S-M	BRC	Harry Redford Cattle Drive Committee
Child Care and Kindergarten				
Continue support for the pilot program for pre-prep and for the ACDA proposal to establish a child care centre	Ongoing	S	ACDA	BRC, Education Queensland
Sport and Recreation				
Construct a new basketball court at the school	Progressing	S	BRC	Education Queensland
Construct a safe motorbike track and encourage the formation of a motorbike club	Ongoing	M	Motorbike Club, Volunteers	BRC
Transport				
Investigate and clarify the transport rules that require parents to drive students out of town to catch the school bus	Ongoing	S	Education Queensland	DTMR

ARAMAC AND DISTRICT – HIGHEST PRIORITY ACTIONS 2013-2015

Actions	Status	Timeframe	Prime Responsibility	Partners
Streetscape and Amenity				
Establish an all-weather walking track around the town	Ongoing	S-M	BRC	
Develop and implement a town beautification plan	Ongoing	M	BRC	ACDA
Improve town lighting	Ongoing	S	BRC	
Council to organise/enforce clean up on private land.	Ongoing	S	BRC	ACDA
Maintain an annual community clean up day	Ongoing	S	BRC	ACDA
Improve parks and gardens	Ongoing	M	BRC	
Increase enforcement of stray dog control	Ongoing			
Community Identity and Engagement				
Council to communicate with community members about decisions give confidence about the equitable distribution of resources throughout the region.	Ongoing	S	BRC	
Council to maintain and increase staff and services as much as possible in communities across the region	Ongoing	S-M	BRC	

ARAMAC AND DISTRICT – HIGHEST PRIORITY ACTIONS 2013-2015

Actions	Status	Timeframe	Prime Responsibility	Partners
Arts, Culture and Heritage				
Convene a gathering of local people to develop priorities for progressing arts, culture and heritage. This would give rise to a set of actions to be progressed by the community as part of the Community Plan	Ongoing	S	Community organisations	ACDA, BRC

ARAMAC AND DISTRICT – LOWER PRIORITY ACTIONS 2013-2015

Actions	Status	Timeframe	Prime Responsibility	Partners
Install a waterslide and a waterpark at the pool	Depends on fixing or replacing the pool	M	BRC	

Health and Well-Being

Hospital

The hospital has been converted into a PHC with a visiting doctor from Barcaldine 1.5 days a week. The downgrading of the hospital means that people often have to travel to Barcaldine for services and there is a lack of continuity of care with different visiting doctors. Young mothers and the elderly don't have access to a resident doctor. RFDS don't hold clinics and the Medicare Local needs to be more active in the community.

There is a visiting public dentist every year and there are physiotherapist, podiatrist, and child nurse visits. However, these visits need to be more frequent. The PHC has an x ray machine but nurses need to be trained to use it. The nurse at the PHC has no relief.

Local health services are crucial to not only providing care for residents, but also in attracting families to the area. Health services are also important for aged people to remain in the community with their family and social contacts.

It is hard to justify positions because health care statistics don't show the real demand for services because so many people away from Aramac access services in the town.

Close contact needs to be maintained with the Medicare Local to coordinate services and address health care issues.

QAS

A QAS ambulance in Aramac provides a professional ambulance service. However, it can't provide adequate support for situations such as acute cardiac arrest or multi-casualty situations. When roads become impassable in wet weather the ambulance cannot access much of the district. The Queensland Government is also moving to a single staff, no relief model. BRC needs to lobby to maintain the two current staff.

With the loss of the hospital, the delivery point for the ambulance is getting further away. Although the district is covered by the fixed wing aircraft of the RFDS service, it was suggested that a medical emergency helicopter should be based in western Queensland to support PHCs. There have been situations when the RFDS has not landed in Aramac.

Aged Care

Good quality independent living units are available and there are vacancies but there are very limited health services to support elderly people. Many elderly people have to move away from the community to access support. They go to residential aged care in Barcaldine, Longreach or Blackall.

The hospital could be a potential site for integrated primary health care including residential aged care. It could:

- have consulting rooms,
- provide aged care support in the community,
- have a respite capacity,
- be a base for services such as Meals on Wheels

This could include a visiting doctor, training nursing staff with relief and some acute care. This would require a blended model where Central West Health and Hospital Board (in conjunction with North West Primary Health Care and the Medicare Local) and HACC work together. A proposal needs to be developed by BRC and put to the Local Health and Hospital Board and Medicare Local.

There are local HACC services, Meals on Wheels and day respite services but staffing is a major problem. Elderly people rely on HACC services if they don't have local family support.

Population, Employment, Services

The maintenance of population and employment is crucial to maintaining health, education and other services but there is a vicious cycle of limited population, employment and access to services. People see these issues as those that face all small rural communities but stressed that people wanted to live in Aramac and deserved access to basic services. The limited rates base meant that the community and the region were dependent on putting strong business cases for funding to state and federal government.

Infrastructure and Facilities

Roads

The road to Barcaldine needs to be widened and more local roads needs to be sealed. This is part of the strategic road plan for the region.

Power

Lobbying needs to continue with Ergon Energy to upgrade powerlines and other infrastructure to improve the reliability of the electricity supply.

Other basic infrastructure needs as follows:

- Aramac is not being connected to the NBN which needs to be investigated. The school and people studying on the internet need broadband access,
- Improved water treatment to reduce corrosion from bore water,
- Upgrading the swimming pool including fixing leaks and installing shade over the pool surrounds,
- Improving the showgrounds to attract more horse sports,
- Upgrading facilities at Aramac Caravan Park (Council owned). The park is very popular with Grey Nomads,
- Improving the library with 6 computers (rather than 4). Council has arranged for school aged children to have free access to internet,

- Providing a community bus to allow young people, for example, to attend the movies in Barcaldine,
- Resolve public liability insurance issues that restrict the use of existing facilities, particularly the gym at the Harry Redford Centre. ACDA is looking at getting insurance and running the gym. It would have a key system with induction and training.
- The squash court needs repair,
- Council is arranging to re-broadcast digital TV.

Investment is needed in the tramway museum. The tramway has its centenary in 2013 and glass viewing screen is needed with a shed for people to walk around the exhibits. This is an opportunity to capitalise on train enthusiast tourism.

Youth

There is little for young people to do in Aramac, particularly on Sundays. There are no programs for youth and bored young people can end up hanging out in the street. Activities for young people were important to retaining youth and attracting families to the town. There is a need to encourage family involvement with children and reduce parent complacency. A range of activities were suggested:

- More after-school and school holiday sport and activities. Adult supervision would be needed with a “driver”/coordinator. RADF funding could be pursued for school holidays activities. Volunteers need to be valued, recognised and supported.
- The establishment of a youth “space”. The Harry Redford Community and Sports Centre could possibly incorporate a youth centre but it would need supervision (probably from volunteers) and not to be a “child minding” place. Sustainable programs are needed but these are often limited by the high turnover of teachers and other potential youth mentors.
- Council establishing a Youth Development Officer to coordinate and conduct activities with young people and families. A Youth Council incorporated into the school would greatly help youth views and actions to be listened to.
- Casual sport such as touch football

Other suggestions were for:

- a family fun day,
- an athletics day for the whole community,
- development of safe motorbike tracks,
- a new concrete basketball court near the tennis courts,
- having greater work experience options for young people and more careers education.

Business and Tourism

Retail

People clearly wanted to retain existing businesses and, if possible increase retail choices. They try to support local businesses by shopping locally but there was limited choice. The Council owns or operates some businesses such as the bakery, bank and RTC. Having a

pharmacy is a priority and other retailers that are needed are a butcher and clothing store. Fuel is often not available locally.

Council provides the main stimulus for economic development. There is limited funding, skills and motivation. Mining development in the region may increase population and business activity.

Tourism

Tourism is a growing economic opportunity. The district had a lot of history and scenery and is popular with Grey Nomads. Priorities for tourism development are:

- A part-time Tourism Officer associated with the Tramway Museum, VIC or RTC, for 3 hours a day 5 days a week,
- Upgrading of facilities at Lake Dunn,
- Improvements to the Torrens Creek Road with the possible establishment of a truck stop,
- Greater promotion and signage,
- Improvements to the local caravan park with more powered sites and improved showers and toilets,
- Organise for food outlets to provide meals on rotation.

Difficulties in getting volunteers for a Visitor Information Centre means that it needs to be located at the library or RTC. It could possibly be at the Tramway Museum but Council funding would be needed for a person for 3 hours per day during the tourist season.

Tourism is limited by lack of accommodation and not having a restaurant. The Harry Redford Cattle Drive is popular. The Outback Tourism Association needs to develop an events calendar that appeals to Grey Nomads.

Employment

Sustainable career-entry employment is crucial to maintaining population and services. However, employment is very limited with the beef industry and the Council being the main employers. There is a lack of skilled services such as tradespeople. People in professional roles can easily feel professionally isolated. More job opportunities are needed. It is important to maintain Council commitment and investment in the community. The Council could offer more work experience and apprenticeships for young people.

Mining

Coal and coal seam gas expansion is a potential opportunity. It is highly site-dependent and no new mines are proposed in the Aramac area at this stage. However, the community needs to be aware of developments and work with the Council to pursue any opportunities.

Primary Industry

The beef industry has endured a prolonged, severe drought and margins remain narrow. The industry has reduced employment substantially even where families own and run multiple properties. Most mustering and other work is done by contractors, many of whom travel through the area, with little impact on long-term local employment opportunities.

Employment in the industry is dependent on seasons and a beef market that makes production consistently profitable. There is also a need for the community to diversify into other industries.

The kangaroo industry has all but ceased and pig shooting has reduced due to collapse in European markets.

Education

Local education goes from preschool to year 10 and there is a high turnover of staff at the school. Students in years 11 and 12 travel to Barcaldine or attend boarding school. Transport rules mean that some parents have to drive 10kms out of town to drop children off for the school bus and this needs to be reviewed.

Local people mentioned the need for school students to be more involved in the community. The school could also be better utilised as a learning environment for the community-at-large. There is no vacation care or after school care.

Child Care and Kindergarten

Playgroup is held once a week in the hall and there is mobile child care from Longreach one day a week.

Aramac Community Development Association (ACDA) has developed a proposal for funding for a child care centre and kindergarten. This could involve a partnership between BRC, Education Queensland, ACDA and C and K. There is strong local demand and qualified people available locally. The centre would not only broaden the experience and socialisation of children but also allow parents to work.

There are funds in trust to go towards the centre but the proposal is currently stalled because there is a need to find a suitable physical space, and have enough qualified staff to meet staff/child ratios. ACDA will continue to progress the proposal.

Streetscape and Amenity

Several suggestions were made to maintain and enhance the appearance and amenity of the community as follows:

- An all-weather walking track is needed around the town,
- Improving stray dog control,
- Upgrading facilities at Lake Dunn,
- Improving lighting entering and leaving town to create an avenue effect,
- Developing and implementing a town design master plan,
- Council need to enforce clean up on private land. The Council Environmental Health Officer is currently doing an assessment of all five towns. A possibility is holding a town clean up day across the Regional Council area.
- Having town welcome signs that are striking and consistent across the Council area. Council has no influence over Main Roads signs which need to meet strict

specifications. However, BRC is currently negotiating with Main Roads to have consistent signage.

- Improving parks and gardens with more pop-up sprinklers,
- Putting a fountain in the park.

Sport and Recreation

People travel to Barcaldine for organised sport. The school has a run club and there is social bowls. Several suggestions to improve sport and recreation including:

- Constructing a safe motorbike track next to “the Rockies”. A motorbike club may need to be formed to manage public liability, rules etc.,
- Construct a recreation trail on the river,
- Have a pier in the lagoon,
- Install a waterslide and diving board at the pool,
- Establish a water park like Longreach has with a tipping bucket.

Housing

There is very limited housing stock and a lot of vacant houses but little can be done about this. Property owners do not have a strong economic incentive to rent houses out and prices are not realistic. Many property owners own houses outright and are happy to have them vacant.

Community Identity, Engagement and Collaboration

People want to see more communication by Council and greater access to Councillors. People feel disenfranchised by amalgamation and they want to be appropriately consulted about Council and state government decisions affecting their community. They accepted that many people were apathetic but requested ongoing communication with Council.

People stressed the need for all towns to be less parochial including:

- Educating people about Council processes so have more confidence in the equity of decision-making and not be concerned about what different communities are getting,
- Councillors considering the whole region equitably and not being parochial themselves,
- Council leading a process of maturity and cooperation between communities.
- For there to be a focus on optimism, a positive outlook and benefits for the community.
- Decisions on the provision of services and infrastructure are made based on the equitable distribution of resources.

Barcaldine Regional Council

Barcaldine Regional Council is the main employer in Aramac and it provided a lot of basic services such as plumbing, carpentry, funerals etc. Local people emphasised the need for Council jobs to be secure in the town. The community also wanted to be reassured that the Council valued small communities in the Council area and considered them closely in

decision-making. Local service managers played an important role in the community and they need to be highly valued in the Council.

Arts, Culture and Heritage

There is considerable interest in further developing the arts and heritage aspects of Aramac. There is Indigenous history, the Tramway Museum, and early explorer and the Harry Redford heritage. However, people emphasised the need to feature the local stories of people and families. Some suggestions are:

- Supporting the committee at the Tramway Museum,
- Establishing a heritage interpretive walk around the town,
- Establishing a family history wall in the town park,
- Opportunities for music and visual arts such as “have a go” events.

BARCALDINE AND DISTRICT

Assets

Lifestyle

People appreciated the easy lifestyle, freedom and easy access to services. The town and district has a nice environment, clean air and a rural atmosphere.

Community Involvement and Social Networks

People are very friendly and know each other. There was a strong sense of community and people actively support the community through a culture of volunteering.

Business

There is a diverse range of small businesses and a variety of retail outlets. The town is also centrally located on two highways with the railway line. The BRE business group and the strong public service presence are important assets.

Tourism

The town has iconic tourist attractions, a reputation for tourism and a good visitor information centre. It benefits from being on the tourist “circuit” in western Queensland and there is a lot of further tourism potential.

Health Care

Residents value local doctors, the hospital, ambulance service, the chemist and health system. Services such as Home and Community Care, Home Assist Secure, HACC Home Modifications Program and Meals on Wheels were valuable, particularly for elderly people.

Safety

The community is very safe with virtually no crime and residents that look after each other.

Amenity

The town is presented well with neat and tidy streets and very good gardens.

Sport and Recreation

Many people are involved in sport and there are a range of sporting opportunities with good basic facilities.

Infrastructure and Facilities

People valued a range of facilities including the high school to year 12, the library, the power station, access to transport with an air service and underground water.

Education

The standard of education is high with access to school based traineeships

Arts and Culture

There is a strong artistic community with talented artists in many fields. There are music programs in schools, arts events and an active Cultural Association and Arts Council. Music is strong with a guitar club and instrumental music program. The Red Shed is an important asset, particularly for Indigenous community members.

Heritage

The community has an iconic heritage including the Tree of Knowledge, the Australian Workers Heritage Centre and many historic buildings.

Preferred Future

The future that residents see for Barcaldine and District in 2020 is:

- Remaining a friendly, involved community but with more facilities, services and business opportunities.
- Every existing business still operating
- Both public and private enterprise providing more employment, particularly for young people
- Quality of life would be enhanced by better education, health care, aged care and youth services
- Facilities would be improved particularly, more quality housing available, an expanded library, improved sporting facilities
- The main street would be well maintained and attractive.
- The town would have modern facilities, more kerbing, channeling and footpaths
- Heritage would be retained and heritage buildings would be maintained

Key Achievements 2009-2012

The main actions in the 2009-2012 Community Plan that have been achieved are:

- The development of a draft regional tourism plan,
- The maintenance of air services,
- The development of a regional arts and culture plan,
- Progress on the Globe Cultural Precinct re-development,
- Establishing the Tree of Knowledge,

- Obtaining a building for a medical centre in Barcaldine,
- Maintaining a visiting dental service,
- Holding training and managing ambulance services for multi-casualty situations,
- The relocation of the skate park to a suitable location in town,
- The renovation of the Radio Theatre has been completed and the theatre is being used regularly by the community,
- Making a council bus available as a community bus,
- Improved access in Oak Street including hand rails,
- Further installation of footpaths, kerbing and channelling, and stormwater drainage,
- Extensions to the sewerage system,
- Development of industrial land,
- Development of a residential estate,
- Upgrading the airport including improvements to the runway, terminal building and security.

BARCALDINE AND DISTRICT – HIGHEST PRIORITY ACTIONS 2013-2015

Actions	Status	Timeframe	Prime Responsibility	Partners
Health and Well Being				
Improve communication and coordination about health plans and community involvement between the Central West Health and Hospital Board, North West Primary Health care and the Medicare Local. Inform the community of roles, approaches and plans	New	S	Central West Health and Hospital Board	North West Primary Health Care, Medicare Local, Local health groups
Advocate for adequate services to the Central West Health and Hospital Board (in conjunction with North West Primary Health Care and the Medicare Local).	This is a high priority. A building has been obtained but further advocacy is needed to attract a permanent doctor and staff the facility	S	BRC	Central West Health and Hospital Board, North West Primary Health Care, Medicare Local, Local health groups
Lobby for a permanent public/private dental service and reduce waiting times.	A visiting service operates in the region but visits need to be more frequent	M	BRC	
Continue to build infrastructure such as exercise equipment and walking tracks to help people remain healthy	New	S-M	BRC	
Conduct public education about the use of the ambulance service and other health care services	Ongoing	S	QAS	Seniors

Timeframe: S, Short term (within 12 months); M, Medium term (1-2 years); L, Long term (2-5 years).

Prime responsibility: The organisation that could be approached to possibly lead or facilitate the strategy or action

Partners: Organisations that could support the implementation of the strategy or action

BARCALDINE AND DISTRICT – HIGHEST PRIORITY ACTIONS 2013-2015

Actions	Status	Timeframe	Prime Responsibility	Partners
Aged Care				
Develop a business case, apply for funding and lobby Central West Health and Hospital Board (in conjunction with North West Primary Health Care and the Medicare Local) to increase high care places at the hospital from 6 to 12	Ongoing	M	BRC	Aged Care Committee, Central West Health and Hospital Board (with North West Primary Health Care and the Medicare Local)
Progress the current proposal for the development of an independent living facility	Council provided land for independent living units. The committee is raising funds. State and federal funding is required	M	Aged Care Committee	BRC and DHA
Infrastructure and facilities				
Remain aware of the roll out of a National Broadband Network, lobby for town connection and inform the community.	Ongoing	M	BRC	NBN Co.
Lobby Telstra to improve mobile phone coverage and eliminate black spots	New	M	Telstra	BRC
Investigate a proposal for a water-based facility at Lagoon Creek and pursue funding options	Ongoing	M	BRC	Volunteers
Audit the condition of footpaths and improve paths on a priority basis	Ongoing	S	BRC	
Extend kerbing, channelling and footpaths	Ongoing	M	BRC	
Audit street lighting and improve lighting on a priority basis	Ongoing	S	BRC	
Improve wheelchair access and step-up access to shops	Ongoing	S	BRC	

BARCALDINE AND DISTRICT – HIGHEST PRIORITY ACTIONS 2013-2015

Actions	Status	Timeframe	Prime Responsibility	Partners
Child Care and Kindergarten				
Council to support the Child Care and Kindergarten Committee to access funding and in-kind support to establish long-hours day care and an early education centre in Barcaldine	A community committee has developed a plan and funding proposal for a centre and this needs to be supported and progressed	S	C and K Committee	BRC, RDA, DCCSDS
Business				
Engage local retailers and the community to encourage them to extend opening hours e.g. not closing on Mondays especially in tourist season	Progressing	S	BRE Group	Local retailers
The BRE group to develop local business awards to encourage entrepreneurship in the business community	New	S-M	BRE Group	Local business operators
Investigate and pursue options for local trade training and expanding apprenticeships	Ongoing but the loss of the TAFE facility has greatly limited trade training opportunities	M	BRE Group	Barcaldine State School, TAFE, Local businesses
Support business-related activities and events.	New	S	BRE Group	
Tourism				
Develop a regional brand with the identity of towns included	New	S	Outback Queensland Tourism Association	BRC

BARCALDINE AND DISTRICT – HIGHEST PRIORITY ACTIONS 2013-2015

Actions	Status	Timeframe	Prime Responsibility	Partners
Tourism cont'd				
Develop options for increasing summer “shoulder” tourism and events-based tourism	Progressing. Council has appointed an events coordinator and efforts are being made to improve the perception of summer tourism in the media	M	Local Tourism Operators	BRC
Redevelop the visitor centre including consideration of the proposal to incorporate it with an arts space	Progressing as part of the Globe redevelopment	S	BRC	BRE Group, Local businesses and Tourist Association
Negotiate with the board of the Australian Workers Heritage Centre about options to improve access, promotion, a cafeteria, and to link it more closely with other tourism options	Ongoing	M	BRC	Community organisations
Continue to communicate with Qantaslink to maintain air services in Barcaldine	Services maintained and ongoing communication is maintained with Qantaslink	S	Qantaslink Consultation Committee	BRC
Conduct a safety campaign for tourists on roads	New	S	QPS, DTMR	Outback Tourism Association
Primary Industries				
Maintain close links with Rural Training Australia and AACC to increase access to skilled rural workers	Ongoing	S-M	Agforce	BRC

BARCALDINE AND DISTRICT – HIGHEST PRIORITY ACTIONS 2013-2015

Actions	Status	Timeframe	Prime Responsibility	Partners
Arts and Culture				
Investigate possible options for the establishment of a multi-purpose arts space. Develop a feasible business case and plan and pursue funding options.	Progressing as part of the Globe redevelopment	M	BRC	Arts groups
Support local museums with visiting specialist curator advice and support to encourage volunteering	New	S	QAS	EMQ and Central West Health and Hospital Board (in conjunction with North West Primary Health Care and the Medicare Local)
Education				
Lobby Education Queensland to construct more kangaroo fencing around schools	New	M	Education Queensland	BRC
Environment				
Lobby for funding and coordinate weed and feral animal control programs	Progressing	S	Landholders	DNRM and BRC
Upgrade weed wash-down bays	Progressing	S	BRC and Agforce	All users

BARCALDINE AND DISTRICT – HIGHEST PRIORITY ACTIONS 2013-2015

Actions	Status	Timeframe	Prime Responsibility	Partners
Youth				
Develop a proposal for the establishment of a youth space and appropriate youth group. Pursue possibilities for funding and support	A building is still available but is not used. The youth group has ceased to operate. There have been difficulties with lack of volunteers and continuity of supervision. However, this will be progressed in the 2013 school year by the Community Development Officer at Council.	S	Community volunteers	BRC
Sport and Recreation				
Upgrade the tennis courts and campdraft facilities	New	S	BRC	Sporting organisations
Progress planning for a multi-purpose showgrounds including sporting facilities	New	S-M	BRC	
Continue to encourage collaboration between sport and recreation groups	New	S	Sport and recreation groups	BRC
Safety				
Increase public awareness of alcohol abuse and underage drinking and increase enforcement to prevent drinking in public	Ongoing	S-M	Police, Central West Health and Hospital Board (in conjunction with North West Primary Health Care and the Medicare Local)	Publicans
Improve community safety including reducing broken glass and improving safety in the home and personal safety	Ongoing	S-M	Police, Central West Health and Hospital Board	BRC

BARCALDINE AND DISTRICT – HIGHEST PRIORITY ACTIONS 2013-2015

Actions	Status	Timeframe	Prime Responsibility	Partners
Managing Potential Mining and Coal Seam Gas Development				
Maintain communication with mining and CSG proponents and state government and keep the community informed of potential activity	New	S	BRC	BRE Group

BARCALDINE AND DISTRICT – LOWER PRIORITY ACTIONS 2013-2015

Actions	Status	Timeframe	Prime Responsibility	Partners
Advocate for reopening of the TAFE facility with community-oriented courses	New	M-L	BRC	

ACTIONS FROM 2009 THAT HAVE BEEN DISCONTINUED

Action	Reasons for being discontinued
Maintain and expand training opportunities for nurses and other medical staff as a way of attracting and retain staff	Staff already receive training and university students are doing community placement
The BRE group to develop ways of encouraging and supporting entrepreneurship in the business community	Replaced by the development of local business awards to encourage entrepreneurship
Implement stage 2 of the Grey Nomads Project (this is progressing)	Funding for the Grey Nomads project has ceased and stage 2 has not been possible.
Continue to lobby Queensland government about the impact of tree clearing and wild rivers legislation	Wild Rivers legislation has been repealed.
Lobby Queensland Rail and other transport providers to modernise facilities and maintain effective and affordable freight and passenger services	Progressed but there has been no change to transport services
Lobby Education Queensland about staffing protocols to be more suitable to the situation of small schools	This action is not achievable in an environment of public sector job reductions
Lobby Education Queensland for more teacher aide positions	This action is not achievable in an environment of public sector job reductions
Resolve the funding and future for Desert Uplands	Desert Uplands did not receive further funding and the Desert Channels NRM has taken over NRM responsibilities in the region
Maintain programs to assist producers in adopting sustainable grazing practices	This action was too general to be effectively progressed
Monitor the progress of the development of an Emissions Trading Scheme and prepare for likely opportunities and challenges	Carbon tax has been introduced
Investigate the possibility and level of support for a combined sport and recreation committee and coordination of the use of facilities	This has not been specifically progressed but sporting groups and other community organisations look to collaborate on an ongoing basis.
Investigate the establishment of an arts officer position for the region. This may be combined with a tourism function.	BRC has arranged for an existing staff member to have responsibility for supporting arts and culture

Health and Well-Being

Hospital

The Barcaldine hospital provides a crucial set of services to the whole region. The hospital is currently fully staffed and busy. There is relatively good access to doctors and allied health services from Longreach. Optometrists provide a visiting service from Rockhampton. Birthing services are not available. Longreach is the only facility in the Central West

Doctors in Barcaldine service Muttaborra, Aramac, Jericho and Alpha. The conversion of the Aramac hospital into a PHC increases pressure on Barcaldine hospital.

There is confusion about the roles of the Medicare Local, the Health and Hospital Board and Central West Health and Hospital Board (in conjunction with North West Primary Health Care and the Medicare Local). More information is needed in the community about the roles and responsibilities of different health entities. Greater coordination is needed between services and of community engagement in planning and operations.

Medical Centre

Residents see this as a very high priority. The community has worked hard to organise the establishment of a medical centre. A building is available but there are difficulties in attracting doctors. People feel that greater collaboration is needed between the state and federal government and a deputation needs to be made to the CEO of the Central West Health and Hospital Board.

Staffing

It is difficult to attract and retain qualified staff. All doctors are temporary/locums and many nurses are agency staff. They contribute strongly while in Barcaldine but move on. Young doctors are often reluctant to come to areas where they are on their own and medical professional organisations require supervision of inexperienced doctors. Major hospitals close to coast are first choice of staff allocated to rural areas. The hospital is retaining graduate nurses but this appears to be cyclic.

There is a need to develop existing staff and attract prac. students and training positions. School students are visiting for nursing experience and the hospital has a relationship with Sunshine Coast TAFE and CQU. A form of rotation system may be possible to maintain visiting medical services in smaller communities.

Ambulance

Barcaldine has a QAS service but an issue is that people who need urgent medical attention are reluctant to call an ambulance. This issue has been featured in the Council newsletter and other ongoing awareness activities. However, more community education is needed to encourage people to use the service when it is needed.

A disaster management plan is needed to prepare for multi-case scenarios such as a serious car crash or natural disaster. The local ambulance committee also needs to be reinvigorated.

Indigenous Health

Indigenous people suffer relatively high rates of chronic disease such as diabetes and cardio vascular disease. People access mainstream services and Central West Health and Hospital Board (in conjunction with North West Primary Health Care and the Medicare Local) has established positions to support people with chronic disease. However, no dialysis service is available. A cardio-vascular disease screening service is available for all Indigenous people through Prince Charles Hospital.

Dental Service

A permanent dentist is required. A dentist currently visits the community every six weeks under an arrangement with a practice in Coopers Plains. This is a valuable service. Some residents want to see reduced waiting times and greater opportunities for private patients to access to service. Other communities need to make people more aware of when the dentist is available.

Mental Health

There are visiting mental health services but there needs to be greater access to services, particularly outside hours. Emergency services at the hospital are not equipped to manage situations and the ambulance and police provide what help they can.

Other health-related issues were:

- Providing health resources in responses to disasters, particularly mental health services,
- Greater encouragement of physical activity with publicly available exercise equipment,
- There needs to be a more integrated approach and greater coordination between health services to avoid duplication or gaps,
- The aerial ambulance is a crucial service but people find it difficult to find their own way home from the centre to which they have been transferred.

Aged Care

Good services are available for caring for older people in their home. HACC, Meals on Wheels and Home Assist Secure provide excellent support. However, there are some difficulties with having adequate facilities at home, safety for workers accessing older homes, and people being very independent and only seeking help after an accident or fall.

High care support is also available but there are not enough beds for aged people attached to the hospital. With an ageing population the number of high care places needs to increase beyond the current six. The hospital also does not have adequate facilities for people with dementia and there have been instances of wandering. A business case for

additional beds needs to be developed and funding applications need to be prepared. A major issue will be acquiring the nursing positions to support more high care beds.

There is an urgent need to establish independent living units with access to existing support services in the community. There has been a lot of consultation on the issue and an aged care study funded by Blueprint for Bush has been completed which showed that improving independent living was the best approach initially. A committee has been working on this for some time and Council has provided land and the committee has developed preliminary plans for buildings. The community has raised \$600,000 for a facility and a range of funding options are being considered. This effort needs to be progressed as a high priority.

A high priority is also the provision of residential aged care to fill the gap between home-based care and high level care. As people's care needs rise they are faced with relocating to Longreach or Blackall or to be near family in cities near the coast. Most older people want to stay in Barcaldine and this relocation can be very difficult.

Other issues are:

- People who own their own home are often too asset-rich to qualify for public aged care places,
- The demand for aged care accommodation and services is increasing but funding has remained the same,

Child Care and Kindergarten

Barcaldine has a private kindergarten but there is no long hours day care. This can limit productivity because parents have to stay out of the workforce longer. Without day care (and kindy), children can not be as advanced in their learning and social skills when they go to prep.

A Child Care and Kindergarten Committee has developed a proposal including a business plan and concept design for an integrated child care centre. They have investigated funding options extensively and have made multiple attempts at securing funding. Funding is very competitive and options to access funding are limited. The committee needs support from Council and the community in developing funding proposals and progressing the initiative.

Infrastructure and Facilities

Improvements to infrastructure and facilities raised by residents are:

- Development of a water facility at Lagoon Creek, but it is likely to involve difficult technical and regulatory issues,
- Establish a community bus (Council has provided a Council vehicle for use as a community bus),
- Proceed with the Showgrounds Management Plan involving relevant businesses and users,

- Improving access to shops. For example, the Post Office has a ramp at the back and this needs to be at the front,
- Making public toilets accessible and installing toilets in Oak Street,
- Conducting a lighting audit and improving lighting,
- Improving security parking at the airport,
- Improve drainage including storm-water drains and kerbing and channeling.

Access in the main street has been improved with handrails and improvements to kerbing but access to shops still needs to be improved.

Business

The loss of population from remote rural centres, and the loss of government and private sector services, creates negative sentiment. Government and private sector support is needed in outback communities and there needs to be a more sophisticated way of lobbying government apart from sheer population numbers. The argument needs to also include a business case, recognize community contribution, impacts on vitality and quality of life etc. The Council is in a position to develop an improved process for demonstrating priorities.

Employment is a key issue. More employment opportunities need to be created but also many businesses found it hard to employ and retain qualified staff. There was strong demand, particularly for tradespeople but it was difficult to attract and retain skilled tradespeople and professionals. Local trade training could address this possibly with a local TAFE facility, more local apprenticeships and distance education.

There is the possibility of providing services to the mining industry such as a mechanics workshop, if the minerals industry expanded in the area.

Access to additional land for housing and industrial development is an issue. People wanted Council to encourage more land to be developed and the subdivision of large blocks.

It was important to maintain and expand transport services including air services, bus services to Rockhampton and Mt Isa and QR freight services.

People felt that a more entrepreneurial spirit was needed in the business community. This involved greater acceptance of new ideas and innovation, and accessing information and support.

Other business issues are:

- Having businesses open for longer hours during major events and peak tourist season (taking into account of work/life balance of business operators and employees). A survey of residents was suggested to give businesses community views about desired opening hours,
- Providing better customer service,
- Reinvigorating the Australian Workers Heritage Centre,

- Lobby for fast internet access,
- Encourage university students to visit and work,
- Businesses and Council to work together with clear plans and direction.

Tourism

Tourism is a major industry that, along with agriculture and the public sector forms the economic base of the town and district. The community has some key tourism assets, particularly the Tree of Knowledge and the Australian Workers Heritage Centre. It is on the crossroads of two major highways and there are organized local tours and historical interpretation.

Promotion needs improvement. The community's assets have been omitted from broader tourism promotion. A sophisticated marketing plan is needed with a stronger identity on maps, on the web and in advertising.

A tourism plan needs to be developed to improving tourism in the summer. This needs to address promotion, attractions, pricing and events.

The Australian Workers Heritage Centre is a key attraction but there is scope to improve its potential for tourism. The conduct of the Centre is wholly up to its board and management. However, community members suggested that discussions could be held with management of the centre to consider improved parking, promotion, signage and possibly a cafeteria. People felt this would benefit the popularity and turnover of the centre and the community's tourism industry as a whole.

Many tourism and business development initiatives rely on local entrepreneurs and somewhat limited entrepreneurial spirit in the business community.

Other suggestions are:

- Developing more events-based tourism,
- Revamping public toilets,
- Investigate holding a music festival,
- Increasing leverage and joint promotion with other tourism attractions such as the Waltzing Matilda Centre, Stockman's Hall of Fame, Qantas Museum etc.
- Look for cooperative marketing opportunities in partnership with Tourism Queensland the Outback Queensland Tourism Association,
- Developing ecotourism opportunities and ventures,
- Establishing an artesian spa,
- Installing a photographic platform.

Primary Industries

The beef and wool production are the major industries in the area. Margins are narrow and producers have to be highly efficient to remain profitable. There has been a substantial increase in feral animals especially wild dogs. The control of feral animals

and weeds, such as Parthenium weed, needs to be ongoing, coordinated and adequately funded. There needs to be state wide guidelines for weed, feral animal and kangaroo control. A wild dog fence needs to be considered.

Infrastructure and facilities needs are:

- Improving the railway for continued access to freight,
- Improvements to roads,
- Enhanced mobile phone coverage particularly between Barcaldine and Longreach,
- Access to high speed broadband.

Incentives are needed to attract and retain primary producers and employees and their families in the area. This could be tax incentives or other financial benefits. The lifestyle benefits of rural living also need to be promoted. Subsidised rural training would help to increase the availability of skilled and reliable employees. Longreach Pastoral College needs to be better marketed with more landholders and potential students being aware of the opportunities there.

Other issues were:

- Drought subsidies should be available for small businesses in rural towns as well as for primary producers,
- Re-developing markets for kangaroo meat,
- Advertising the low cost and safety of living in rural areas,
- Giving rural people opportunities to have a say in decision-making.

Arts and Culture

Arts and Cultural Plan

An overall plan for arts and culture has been developed for the region incorporating the use and development of venues, support for the arts and arts events and activities.

Globe Cultural Precinct

The Globe hotel is being re-developed as a multi-function arts/cultural space incorporating the Visitor Information Centre. Residents see this as a high priority and Council is progressing the project.

The Radio Theatre

The Arts Council owns the Radio Theatre and dedicated volunteers run movies twice weekly. This is an important cultural activity in the community, particularly for young people. Renovations have been conducted on the building which has included volunteers from the Grey Nomads project. The theatre is operating well due to volunteer effort but funding is limited and volunteers are at risk of becoming exhausted. The theatre now needs to be upgraded to a digital cinema.

Arts Officer

Council has arranged for an existing staff member to take responsibility for development and coordination of the arts.

Indigenous Arts

The Red Shed is an important focus for Indigenous art. Some people suggested that greater connections could be made between the Red Shed and the rest of the community to foster Indigenous and Non-Indigenous forms of art.

Other suggestions and comments are:

- Discussions need to be held with the Australian Workers Heritage Centre to investigate opportunities to link the local arts community more closely with the centre,
- More performing arts are needed with a “driver” being encouraged to restart the little theatre,
- Different communities have worked together on RADF proposals and there is good general cooperation between communities.

Education

Barcaldine offers quality education with a range of options and subjects for students. Class sizes were relatively small allowing teachers to provide personal attention. There are high levels of student progression with many students gaining places in tertiary education.

Current state wide staffing protocols for schools mean that small schools struggle to retain teacher positions. People mentioned the need for Education Queensland to review this policy with regard to small rural schools to make staffing more feasible in regional areas. Small communities have greater expectation of teachers such as being involved in fundraising etc.

A range of other suggestions were:

- At the moment some subjects are studied by distance education. Staff levels need to increase to allow subjects to be offered in four semesters.
- Increasing the number of teacher aides
- Federal funding for education (such as through Outback Pathways and Careers) needs to continue in rural areas to make up for additional costs,
- Inequity between government departments in conditions and housing needs to be addressed such as between Education Queensland and DTMR.

The TAFE facility in Barcaldine has closed but the building remains. Trainee numbers have been reduced and students study on-line through Mackay and Toowoomba TAFE. This has greatly reduced opportunities for local apprenticeships. The community needs to advocate to reopen TAFE but it seems very unlikely that the decision will be reversed without significant mining or coal seam gas development.

Environment

Weed Management

Weeds and pests are a major issue that requires a coordinated approach. Council needs to have a pest management strategy and enforce weed management. It can also be a partner with NRM groups to help coordinate neighbours controlling weeds together.

Communication

Ongoing communication is needed to continue to expose people who have achieved successes and to show “good news” stories. This is a key part of NRM education that also provides incentive and motivation. There needs to be an investment in information sharing, organisation, and encouraging NRM “drivers”.

Landscape Scale

Many NRM issues require a landscape scale approach that includes catchments and subcatchments. This requires partnerships between groups and landholders and funding, communication and on-ground action that go across traditional boundaries. Desert Channels NRM and the Council need to be partners in NRM issues.

Other suggestions are:

- Recycling should be introduced where feasible,
- If coal mining goes ahead, there needs to be offsets for graziers such as biodiversity corridors etc.,
- Improve the Council website with regard to NRM issues,
- There needs to be an NRM newsletter that goes to all the community,
- Managing the impacts of the carbon tax and emissions trading scheme.

Youth

Young people appreciate the support they have in the community and see that many people make an effort to improve things for youth. They felt that there are a range of facilities that they have good access to. Educational choices such as school based apprenticeships were important.

Youth Space

A community member has offered a building for use by young people but the youth group has not continued. There was strong interest in a group being re-established with autonomy for young people but with support from Council and the community. An attempt will be made to re-establish the group and organise activities at the beginning of the 2013 school year. The Council Community Development Officer will help coordinate this.

Business

Young people felt that Barcaldine has a good main street with an attractive streetscape. However, empty shops are very obvious. They want to see more businesses established and existing businesses open longer. They particularly wanted to see a DVD hire business but felt that it would have to be part of another business to be viable.

Travel

Young people have to travel a lot to go to school and play sport. Jericho and Aramac students have to travel up to 80 km each way to go to high school in Barcaldine. This involves a lot of time and expense. A Council bus is available for hire for people to travel to other towns for entertainment, shopping and visiting friends.

Technology

Improving access to technology was important for young people. Poor internet speed limited their use of the internet. There is digital TV or radio available and FM radio. Imparja and Channel 7 TV are relayed from Alice Springs and local content and advertisements are not relevant. Young people felt that technology was an important way for them to be involved in the community and in the wider world.

Other issues raised are:

- Addressing underage drinking and alcohol abuse,
- Making the library bigger with more computers and greater choice of books.

Seniors

Seniors appreciated the safety, friendly service and easy-going rapport of the community. They found living in the district affordable and more retired people are moving to Barcaldine.

The Senior Citizens Association and 60 and Better are active groups but they are perceived in the community as “oldies” and people seemed reluctant to get involved. These groups have encouraged older people to bring older people out into the community. However, members felt that it was difficult to involve older people. While many older people are “working” in other groups, baby sitting, doing craft, volunteering at Red Cross etc., there were also a lot of people who weren’t very involved.

Seniors were also concerned about better access. They feel that almost all footpaths need improvement, wheelchair access needs to be better and kerbing and channelling needs to be extended.

Sport and Recreation

Community members were very active in sport and recreation but the maintenance of facilities, public liability, travel for competition, encouraging volunteers and fund raising were all challenges. It was suggested that costs could be reduced and participation encouraged by combining facilities in one location and having a combined sports club. A central committee could do the paperwork, registrations, compliance for insurance etc. that would cover all sports.

A sport and recreation plan has been developed by the Council. Priorities are:

- New tennis courts,
- Upgrading the campdraft and rodeo grounds at the showgrounds,
- Developing a plan for the upgrade of the showgrounds as a multi-purpose show and recreation facility.

Safety

Many people saw the community as safe but they also felt concerned about underage drinking and alcohol abuse. There was something of an alcohol culture and alcohol abuse was seen by some as a rite of passage from young people. Boredom added to this and people mentioned that young people were drinking at younger ages. Some suggestions are:

- Progressing the youth space and developing more activities for young people.
- Greater enforcement by publicans and police to stop adults drinking outside hotels which attracts young people.

Preparation for Potential Mining and Coal Seam Gas Development

There are ongoing coal seam gas and petroleum exploration activities in the area. If mining proceeds, it is important for businesses to be ready to benefit, for impacts to be managed and for mining staff to be integrated into the community. This involves:

- Being well-informed about potential development and what it means for the community and region,
- Businesses being “tender-ready” - understanding the requirements of mining companies and meeting their standards to be a contractor/supplier,
- Accessing support such as from the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning.

JERICHO AND DISTRICT

Assets

Lifestyle

Jericho and district has a quiet rural lifestyle that is peaceful and safe to raise a family.

Community Involvement and Social Networks

The community has a strong spirit and people are generous, friendly and actively support the community. Many people have family and close friends in the community and a long history of working together. People communicate readily with each other and with visitors.

The Drive-In

The Drive-In is a unique community asset where events raised money for school and community activities. It stimulated interaction with other communities and brought money into the town.

Business

People valued local businesses including the pub, the postal service, the garage, and the rural supplies/shop. It was seen as a good community in which to run a small business.

Health Care

The Spiritus health service was highly valued. People appreciated the health clinic and its dedicated staff. It allowed medical services to be accessed locally and supported the community in many ways.

Safety

People saw Jericho and district as very safe with virtually no crime. It was a secure environment for children and elderly people and local people looked out for each other. People valued the Rural Fire Brigade and its important role in managing and controlling fire threats.

Family Oriented

The community was very family-friendly and a safe enjoyable place for children.

Environment

The community was clean and peaceful with fresh air. The Jordan River added to the district's environment and amenity.

Sport and Recreation

A large shed with sports equipment and campdrafting were seen as assets.

Facilities and Services

Facilities that were seen as assets were:

- The school,
- Police,
- Aged care and health care services,
- Rural Transaction Centre,
- Public transport - rail and bus,
- The Shire Office and Library,
- The showground,
- The Shire Hall.

Activities

The common around the town allowed people to bushwalk, ride motorbikes etc.

Education

The school is an important asset where the community supports the school strongly with working bees, fund raising etc.

Affordable

Infrastructure and services are relatively cost effective relative to costs in larger centres.

Preferred Future

The future that residents saw for Jericho and District in 2020 was:

- increased population - realistically, people felt that the town could grow by up to 100 people over the next ten years but mining in the region may increase further,
- more families would support the school, businesses and services,
- employment opportunities would attract people to settle in the district,
- maintaining current services (at the least) and improving basic infrastructure and services, particularly sealed roads and an improved power supply,
- the levy bank would protect the town from flooding, allowing sewerage to be installed and land to be released for development,
- more younger people in the community,
- more businesses,
- a well maintained health clinic with a doctor weekly,
- improved facilities such as the showground, caravan park and sports facilities.
- the community would remain clean and tidy,
- there would be more walking tracks and facilities at the river.

Key Achievements 2009-2012

The main actions in the 2009-2012 Community Plan that have been achieved are:

- The sealing of all streets that are used in the town,
- The completion of the flood mitigation study and implementation of recommendations, particularly the extension of the levee around the town. The levee prevented flooding during peaks in 2012,
- The sealing and fencing of the airstrip to make it an all-weather strip,
- Improving the appearance of the cemetery,
- Improving facilities at Redbank,
- Extending the opening hours of the information centre,
- Council organising the clean-up of private land,
- Improved access to the sports shed,
- Improvements to walking paths and footpaths,
- Shire hall has been renovated with the upgrade of showers and toilets so it can act as an evacuation centre,
- Barcaldine Regional Council has taken over the operation of the postal service. It has been re-located to the Information Centre and hours have been extended,
- Upgrade of park facilities,
- Upgrade of the sound system at the Drive-In.

JERICHO AND DISTRICT – HIGHEST PRIORITY ACTIONS 2013-2015

Actions	Status	Timeframe	Prime Responsibility	Partners
Health and Well Being				
Support efforts to lobby for a resident doctor in Alpha that could provide visiting clinics in Jericho.	Ongoing	S	Central West Health and Hospital Board	North West Primary Health Care and the Medicare Local
Liaise with Spiritus about the possibility of extending the Spiritus service from 3 days to 5 days a week and the provision of relief for the Spiritus service	Ongoing	M	BRC	Spiritus Community Services
Negotiate with Spiritus to maximise the use of the current ambulance.	Ongoing	S-M	BRC	Community organisations
Lobby the QAS for a QAS ambulance service with a trained paramedic	Ongoing	L	BRC	
Infrastructure				
Progress the sealing of the Jericho-Blackall Road and the Tambo Road.	This is progressing with repairs from flood damage	L	BRC	DTMR
Investigate the installation of sewerage in Jericho	Subject to ongoing lobbying, flood protection and development in the community	M	BRC	
Extend kerbing and channelling	Ongoing	M	BRC	
Lobby Ergon Energy to improve the reliability of power supply	Ongoing	S	BRC	

Timeframe: S, Short term (within 12 months); M, Medium term (1-2 years); L, Long term (2-5 years).

Prime responsibility: The organisation that could be approached to possibly lead or facilitate the strategy or action

Partners: Organisations that could support the implementation of the strategy or action

JERICHO AND DISTRICT – HIGHEST PRIORITY ACTIONS 2013-2015

Actions	Status	Timeframe	Prime Responsibility	Partners
Flood Mitigation				
Arrange for more local input into disaster planning and management	New	S	BRC	Community organisations
Community Facilities				
Apply for funding to install a larger swimming pool, possibly with heating	Any improvements will depend on funding	M	BRC	
Continue to beautify and maintain the area at Red Bank	Ongoing	S	BRC	
Upgrade signage to local facilities	Ongoing	S	BRC	
Community Services				
Lobby to include other data apart from only population and service clients to justify services	New	M	BRC	
Business and Employment				
Develop more opportunities for traineeships and apprenticeships in the district.	Progressed as part of Council's appointment of apprentices and trainees	M	Local Businesses	BRC
Investigate extending the opening hours of the Information Centre/RTC	Progressing – open from 9am to 3pm	S	BRC	

JERICHO AND DISTRICT – HIGHEST PRIORITY ACTIONS 2013-2015

Actions	Status	Timeframe	Prime Responsibility	Partners
Release of Land				
Council to continue to negotiate for the release of land including lobbying Queensland Rail for the release of railway land	Ongoing	M	BRC	
Tourism				
Upgrade the Council website to feature Jericho and district more prominently	Ongoing	S	BRC	
Environment				
Council to organise/enforce clean up on private land.	Ongoing	S	BRC	
Housing				
Investigate the establishment of independent aged living units	Ongoing	M	Community organisations	
Preparation for Mining Development				
Re-invigorate the Jericho Community Action Group (JCAG) as a group that can help the community prepare for mining development	New – this action relies on community motivation	S	Community	BRC
Maintain contact with Council to ensure that the community is well informed of mining developments	New	S	Community organisations	BRC

JERICHO AND DISTRICT – LOWER PRIORITY ACTIONS 2013-2015

Actions	Priority	Timeframe	Prime Responsibility	Partners
Lobby for a more frequent public dental service	New	S	BRC	Dental service provider

ACTIONS FROM 2009 THAT HAVE BEEN DISCONTINUED

Action	Reasons for being discontinued
Investigate the establishment of a roadhouse and develop a proposal with which to approach a potential operator	Cannot be progressed without a major commercial investor. May be pursued again if mining development justifies a business case.

Health and Well being

Major health issues are chronic illness (particularly for aged people), mental health, aged care, dental care and alcohol management.

The Spiritus Health Service is very important. A doctor visits from Barcaldine for half a day every Thursday. A Spiritus nurse service is not available at the moment and there is an agency nurse available from Alpha.

A resident doctor is urgently needed in Alpha and that position would provide a visiting medical clinic on a weekly basis in Jericho. Residents felt that this would be a suitable service for the community.

A community-funded ambulance became a QAS vehicle but there is no-one trained and able to be a driver/paramedic. The service is at risk of being discontinued. Having a nurse conducting an ambulance service and also being on-call was seen as untenable. People wanted resolution to this situation. This would ideally be a full time QAS paramedic service.

The data that services are based on are inaccurate. The demand for services is limited by the lack of availability of services and base population data does not account for demand from tourists and FIFO workers. People felt that the full cost of patients not receiving adequate care or traveling to access services was not considered in current service decision-making.

Residents saw the need to extend the hours of the Spiritus Health Service to 5 days a week and for it to be open during holidays. Many aged people suffer from chronic illnesses and an improved health service would put less demand on out of hours care.

Residents felt that mining development would have significantly change demand for services, particularly health services. Funding from the mining sector was seen as a good option to provide health services, particularly a paramedic. New models of service delivery need to be developed between BRC, Central West Health and Hospital Board (in conjunction with North West Primary Health Care and the Medicare Local) and mining companies.

There is a visiting public dental service every 3 months but additional services are needed to deal with a backlog of cases. Health promotion, screening services and in-home care are coordinated through the North and West Primary Health Care but more frequent visits are needed.

Alcohol abuse is a major problem for all ages with major health and social consequences. Alcohol awareness and health promotion programs such as “How old is your liver” need to be available.

People also saw the need for:

- greater relief for staff,
- coordination of services to extend hours of access,
- greater continuity of care and less turnover of doctors and nurses,
- A local birthing centre in Alpha to overcome the disruption of families having to go away to give birth.

Aged Care

Semi-supported living and visiting in-home care are key services that are required. Independent living units are needed, such as a duplex, behind the existing ones with links to HACC services

Preparation for Mining Development

People felt that mining development would have significant impacts on the community, Key changes that are expected are:

- Greater local employment, infrastructure investment,
- Greater population and demand for services improving the justification for improved services and facilities,
- More traffic,
- Less safety,
- More “strangers” and anxiety,
- Relationship and personal issues are likely to develop with FIFO workers in camps separated from their families,
- Long term residents may sell and leave the community,
- Economic activity from FIFO workers will leak out of the community but investment by local contractors will have a higher multiplier effect,
- Potential off-farm income for landholders.

Residents felt that local people generally did not believe that mining development would occur and that there was little awareness or preparation for mining development.

Businesses need to be prepared for local content purchasing by mining companies. While some may not be suited to tendering, they can be positioned to benefit from casual purchasing card shopping.

People felt that the amenity needs to be maintained by controlling coal dust and ensuring that the district’s water supply is secure.

Residents felt that a community committee including mining companies needed to oversee the preparedness of the community for mining development including the provision of services in the community and facilitating local purchasing. This logically would be a re-invigorated JCAG (Jericho Community Action Group) but this would depend on community motivation. A community committee could be established to maintain communication with mining companies in collaboration with the Council.

Population and the Release of Land

People wanted to see a gradual sustainable increase in the population based on greater opportunities for young people and stable employment. This would support key services such as the school and health services. Some people suggested incentives were needed to attract people and investment to Jericho and the district.

Many people felt that development in the town was limited by lack of availability of land. The release of land and the provision of sewerage are tied together and dependent on the community being protected from flooding by its extended levy bank and the resolution of native title claims over land in and around the town. Council continues to arrange for the release of land including lobbying Queensland Rail for the release of railway land north of the railway line.

Housing

Housing priorities are more affordable housing opportunities and the development of 1 or 2 bedroom units for the elderly. Access to public housing depends on negotiations with the Department of Housing and Public Works.

Infrastructure

Roads

People wanted to see roads maintained well and an extension of bitumen roads, particularly, the Jericho-Blackall Road and the Tambo Road. All streets that people use in Jericho have been sealed but kerbing and channeling needs to be extended to allow for better drainage, to encourage development and to improve the appearance of the town. More footpaths are needed with more shade and trees. These should be part of an amenity plan for the town.

Power

Power infrastructure is limited with lines not being large enough for the demand. A more reliable power supply was important but depended on negotiations and the priorities of Ergon Energy.

Sewerage

There is strong support for the installation of sewerage in Jericho. People felt that not having sewerage limited development, was not environmentally sustainable and should be part of modern living even in a small community. There are no immediate plans but Council planning for sewerage has shown that it will cost up to \$1500 per household which was deemed to be too expensive. More certainty about future growth is needed to justify this level of expense.

Airstrip

The airstrip has been sealed to make it all-weather. This supports RFDS access and private and commercial flights.

Telecommunications need to be improved to enhance mobile phone, internet, radio and TV access.

Community Facilities

Progress has been made on improving a range of community facilities including facilities at Redbank, walking tracks and footpaths, and improvements at the cemetery. However, further suggestions for improvements are:

- Having a larger swimming pool, particularly for the enjoyment of children and families. However, this would be a major cost. Some people also suggested heating the pool,
- Establishment of a skate park,
- Having public and private gardens neat and tidy,
- A shade shelter over the multi-purpose court at the school (consultation is required to have the school possibly access the Council sports shed),
- Updating signage to local facilities, such as signage for the Post Office in Faraday St,
- Improving the caravan park,
- Continuing to beautify and maintain Redbank including adjoining land (this would require discussion with the current committee),
- Upgrading and promoting the drive-in theatre,
- A community garden,
- Tanks installed on the Sports Shed to be used for topping up the swimming pool,
- A path in the park for wheelchair access,
- Preserving and maintaining heritage buildings,
- Improving the use of the community shed.

Business and Employment

There is very little local employment apart from the Council. Residents saw the overall need to support existing businesses, to stimulate new businesses and to create long term employment opportunities. Suggestions are:

- more employment opportunities for school leavers,
- improved viability of primary industries,
- greater business collaboration such as sharing freight,
- businesses preparing for potential mining development,
- improving community facilities to encourage business investment,
- having more land and buildings available for businesses,
- considering policies such as having local contractors to work on roads.

A priority was to prospect for the establishment of a roadhouse to cater for tourists and trucking. This would include fuel and food and would provide stable local employment. Potential operators needed to be identified and invited to develop a proposal. A possible location is east of Jordan Creek and on the western side of town.

A second priority was developing more opportunities for traineeships and apprenticeships in the district. Some local businesses had apprentices and this needed ongoing support and expansion.

Services

Services are limited and the community is finding it hard to maintain basic services. Transport and health services are possibly under threat and census data does not reflect the true demand for services given demand from FIFO and DIDO miners. Mining development may increase population and demand for services.

Recent drought, fire and flood have increased stress on individuals and families and raised the need for more support services. Elderly people in particular struggle with the cost of living.

Apart from health services, priorities for improved services are:

- Extended opening hours of the Information Centre/Rural Transaction Centre,
- Extended hours for family day care,
- Better access to banking (EFTPOS is available and there is a Commonwealth bank agency at the Post Office).

Tourism

Facilities have been improved for tourists, particularly at Redbank, and a promotional brochure has been produced. Tourism requires ongoing improvement and maintenance of facilities and promotion. Further developments that are needed are:

- Updating the Council website to feature the district more prominently,
- Continuing to improve facilities for caravans,
- Staffing the Information Centre,
- Improved signage.

Disaster Management

Greater local input is needed in current disaster management procedures that are managed from Longreach.

Environment

Apart from improving parks and gardens, residents emphasise:

- continuing to beautify Red bank (river) including the removal of rubbish,
- investigating the establishment of a recycling service with bins.

Community involvement

Community involvement and events needed to continue to be encouraged. JCAG needs to be re-invigorated.

MUTTABURRA AND DISTRICT

Assets

Lifestyle

Residents saw the community as quiet, peaceful and easy-going. Basic services are accessible and people can easily walk to all amenities. It is attractive to retirees and there is green grass.

Community Involvement and Social Networks

People are friendly, positive and community-minded. People felt included and respected and proud of the area. The town and the surrounding district are close knit and people valued the MCDA, the publican and the PHC nurse, in particular.

Business

Employment is available on properties (although this had decreased). The area has huge tourism potential, particularly with the Muttaborrasaurus, the Centre of Queensland, the river and being close to Longreach. The motel and shop are important and proof of investment confidence.

Health Care

The PHC and its staff are highly valued.

Safety

People feel safe and secure, particularly for families and children.

Environment

The river is a major asset and there is good access to quality water. People appreciated the climate and natural environment.

Sport and Recreation

Residents recognised the value of the Aquatic Centre and the active swimming club. Recreational areas such as Steep Gully were important.

Facilities

Unlike most communities in the region, Muttaborra has sewerage. The Post office and the library are important assets. Residents can access services in Longreach but improvements to the road are a major issue. A community bus to Longreach is run by MCDA every fortnight.

Education

People appreciated the education available locally and strongly supported the role of the school.

History

The town and district has a rich history including the Union Camp and Union Hole.

Preferred Future

The future that residents saw for Muttaborra and District in 2020 was:

- a vibrant rural community with more people, improved basic infrastructure, more facilities and services, with an expanded economy and more attractive.
- Increased population with more sustainable employment and improved facilities and services for families.
- basic services particularly the school and the health service,
- more viable primary industries
- expanded tourism and tourism facilities with Muttaborra being more “on the map” making full use of its dinosaur theme.
- improved basic infrastructure particularly a sealed road to Longreach, broadband internet and mobile phone access and a reliable electricity supply,
- the town and district would be more attractive with houses better maintained, vacant blocks cleaned up, well maintained parks with adequate shade, water-based recreation and with footpaths and kerbing.

Key Achievements 2009-2012

The main actions in the 2009-2012 Community Plan that have been achieved are:

- The maintenance of visiting medical and allied health services,
- Access to a visiting physiotherapist and podiatrist,
- The provision of QAS training for community ambulance drivers,
- Local road maintenance,
- Continued lobbying of Ergon Energy for a more reliable power supply,
- Investigation of the feasibility of a solar thermal power station,
- The establishment of a shop and café by a local business operator,
- The development of a regional tourism plan,
- Investigation of landholder preferences about access to the Centre of Queensland site,
- Improvements at the school included fencing the oval and raising the building,
- Upgrading of picnic and shade facilities at the river,
- Upgrading of facilities, trees, shade and gardens in Jubilee Park and in the central part of the town,
- Improving and extending footpaths in the main area of the town,
- Establishment of a walking track around the town with landscaping (partially done and being completed),
- Installing a skate park near the aquatic centre,
- Maintenance of council staff numbers,
- The construction of a BMX track,
- Upgrading of the community hall toilets and disability facilities,

- Establishment of the spa at the aquatic centre,
- Fencing of the airport.

MUTTABURRA AND DISTRICT – HIGHEST PRIORITIES FOR 2013-2015

Actions	Status	Timeframe	Prime Responsibility	Partners
Health and Well Being				
Maintain weekly visits by a public doctor and lobby to increase continuity of care	Ongoing	S	Central West Health and Hospital Board (with North West Primary Health Care and the Medicare Local)	PHC
Lobby to increase the frequency of visits from a public dentist to six monthly	New	S	Central West Health and Hospital Board (with North West Primary Health Care and the Medicare Local)	PHC
Liase with RFDS to improve access to services and reduce bureaucracy	New	S	PHC	BRC
Aged Care				
Plan to establish an additional aged care residential unit opposite the PHC	Ongoing	S	BRC	MCDA
Maintain in-home care services and support for families providing in-home care	Ongoing – provided by Winton HACC	S	Winton HACC	MCDA
Infrastructure and Facilities				
BRC and MCDA to lobby LRC and work through the Outback Roads Alliance to have Longreach-Muttaburra Road sealed.	Ongoing	S	BRC, MCDA	Outback Roads Alliance
BRC to apply for funding to have the Bowen Downs Road sealed to form a road from Central Qld to the north	Ongoing	S-M	BRC	MCDA
Maintain a high standard of local road maintenance including sheeting of gravel roads	Progressing	S-M	BRC	

Timeframe: S, Short term (within 12 months); M, Medium term (1-2 years); L, Long term (2-5 years).

Prime responsibility: The organisation that could be approached to possibly lead or facilitate the strategy or action

Partners: Organisations that could support the implementation of the strategy or action

MUTTABURRA AND DISTRICT – HIGHEST PRIORITIES FOR 2013-2015

Actions	Status	Timeframe	Prime Responsibility	Partners
Infrastructure and Facilities cont'd				
Lobby Ergon Energy to improve the reliability of power supply including issues such as replacement of condemned poles and realignment of lines near roads for use of maintenance	Ongoing	S	BRC	MCDA
Council and the community to work together to complete the walking track with exercise equipment, trees, seating and solar lighting	Progressing	M	BRC	MCDA
Establish more facilities at the river ensuring that they are flood-proof	New	S	BRC	MCDA
Establish a BBQ area and children's equipment at the aquatic centre	New	S	BRC	MCDA
Advertise the spa at the aquatic centre and investigate the feasibility of increasing the hours of access perhaps with a key system.	New	S	MCDA	
Business				
Investigate the feasibility of establishing light industrial businesses in Muttaborra (This depends on having a business-ready location already approved and developed)	Progressing	M	MCDA	BRC
Negotiate with Queensland Government to release appropriate land for development	Ongoing	S	BRC	DSDIP
Investigate the feasibility of establishing a demountable pet food processing facility.	New	S	BRC	MCDA

MUTTABURRA AND DISTRICT – HIGHEST PRIORITIES FOR 2013-2015

Actions	Status	Timeframe	Prime Responsibility	Partners
Tourism				
Upgrade and develop more facilities at the caravan park including improved toilets and showers, moving slabs and having more powered sites.	Ongoing	S	BRC	
Develop a proposal and seek funding for the development of a dinosaur centre	Progressing	M	MCDA	BRC
Re-develop the current small dinosaur display with new Perspex and additional displays	New	S	MCDA	BRC
Develop dinosaur branding including Muttaborra specific T shirts, souvenirs, stickers and street signs.	New	S-M	MCDA	Outback Tourism
Develop a proposal to improve the Union Camp and Union Hole as a tourism attraction as part of a regional tourism plan.	Progressing	S-M	BRC	BRC
Develop a sign as a tribute to the geographic centre of Queensland in the town.	New	S	MCDA	Outback Tourism
Update the website to feature businesses in town and optimise web search for “Dinosaur Trail”	New	S	BRC	Outback Tourism, MCDA
Establish the pub as an iconic attraction	New	M	MCDA	Outback Tourism

MUTTABURRA AND DISTRICT – HIGHEST PRIORITIES FOR 2013-2015

Actions	Status	Timeframe	Prime Responsibility	Partners
Education				
Maintain a range of improvements at the school including fencing, retaining walls etc.	Ongoing	S-M	P and C	Education Queensland
Streetscape and Amenity				
Council to continue to monitor clean up on private land, particularly vacant lots	Ongoing	S	BRC	
Council to maintain and improve the appearance and neatness of public land	Ongoing	S	BRC	
Streetscape and Amenity				
BRC to develop local laws that allow the enforcement of the clean up of private land, particularly vacant lots, and have more frequent inspections	Progressing	S	BRC	
Improve signage as part of an ongoing signage maintenance plan	Ongoing	S	Business operators, BRC	DTMR
Complete the installation of a BMX track	Progressing	S	Community volunteers	BRC

MUTTABURRA AND DISTRICT – HIGHEST PRIORITIES FOR 2013-2015

Actions	Status	Timeframe	Prime Responsibility	Partners
Sport and Recreation				
Maintain and support all sport and recreation clubs	Ongoing	S	MCDA	BRC
Community Identity and Engagement				
Maintain and increase Council staff	Ongoing	S	BRC	
Maintain communication between the Council and the community via open meetings organised by MCDA. These need to be at a convenient time for community members.	Ongoing	S	BRC	
Move the community notice board from the Council office to outside the shop and include a section for the school	New	S	BRC	

MUTTABURRA AND DISTRICT – LOWER PRIORITY ACTIONS 2013-2015

Actions	Status	Timeframe	Prime Responsibility	Partners
Contact Telstra to fix utility holes	New	M	MCDA	BRC
Maintain Council email updates and letter drops	New	S	BRC	
Establish appropriate signage in the main street for the Post Office Information Centre	Part of signage plan	S	BRC	MCDA

ACTIONS FROM 2009 THAT HAVE BEEN DISCONTINUED

Action	Reasons for being discontinued
Investigate the feasibility of a solar thermal power station and business models that it could operate under	Has been investigated and is not viable without a major investor.
Negotiate with the private landholder to seek greater access to the geographic centre of Queensland	The private landholder does not want greater access to the site
Investigate the feasibility of a movable grandstand with shade for use at the school and by the whole community	No longer a priority
Lobby to maintain rivers as they are. Recognise the local river system (i.e. the Cooper System) as separate from the Diamantina and the differences between the northern and southern sides. Maintain access to post peak pumping.	Wild Rivers legislation has been repealed.
Investigate the feasibility of establishing a lake/waterpark	Investigated and this would require considerable funding and management
Establish a facility with gym equipment for use by the community	Exercise equipment has been established on the walking track

Health and Well Being

The Primary Health Centre plays a very important role in the community providing basic health services and an ambulance service. A visiting doctor from Barcardine provides a clinic once a week which is particularly important for aged care. A skin clinic and dentist visits once a year. Mental health services visit once a month and there is a youth suicide prevention service. There are also visits from women's health practitioners, a physiotherapist, a podiatrist and a dietician but a visiting optometrist is needed. The community is also covered by the RFDS.

People stressed the need to maintain and improve health services. They particularly sought:

- Greater continuity of care and personal trust develop by having the same visiting doctors and nurses,
- The retention of 24 hour on call capacity at the PHC,
- More support was needed for the QAS to train of ambulance drivers,
- More frequent access to a public dentist i.e. every six months,
- Improved decision-making and less bureaucracy in accessing the RFDS.

The impact of drought has increased the need for mental health support and psychological first aid. There are difficulties in attracting qualified and approachable health staff in rural areas.

Efforts are being made to educate people about alcohol abuse and to manage alcohol consumption in the community.

Aged Care

There is one aged care accommodation unit in Muttaborra and at least one more is needed. Many aged people relocate to larger centres to access support, but having two units available locally is important.

A high standard of general in-home aged care is provided by family members and community volunteers, with support from Community Options from Winton. Greater access to allied health professionals would greatly support this. More community volunteers were also needed to visit the elderly and assist them with house and garden maintenance. Visiting palliative care is difficult to access. Some people suggested a medical alert device being made available for all aged persons.

Infrastructure and Facilities

Roads

The sealing of the Longreach to Muttaborra road is a major issue. This would make a major difference to the economy, business opportunities and the quality of life in Muttaborra and district. It would allow all-weather access to services, enhance tourism and primary industry, improve safety, and greatly reduce maintenance costs.

The Muttaborra Community Development Association (MCDA) has lobbied both Barcaldine Regional Council and Longreach Regional Council about the road. BRC has bitumened the road to the Council boundary and some distance beyond that. The remainder of the road is the responsibility of Longreach Regional Council and BRC has made representations to LRC. Lobbying by MCDA and BRC needs to continue. This needs to target not just LRC but also the Department of Main Roads and RDA.

Sealing the Bowen Downs Road is also a priority. Laying about 50kms of bitumen would give all weather access to Townsville. BRC has set aside funds for a bridge at Bullock Creek. For an all weather access to Townsville to occur, the bridge at Prairie Creek is needed however Prairie Creek is located in the Flinders Shire area and within the Northern Main Roads district administered from Cloncurry.

BRC and MCDA will continue to work with the Outback Regional Roads Alliance to supporting funding for the upgrade of these roads by the responsible body. Council roads are deteriorating because of delays with the appointment of contractors.

Power

The power supply to Muttaborra and district is unreliable. Power failures and brown-outs have damaged equipment. Lobbying of Ergon Energy needs to continue to have the company invest in the power line to ensure uninterrupted supply. An additional substation may be required.

Some residents suggested investigating the feasibility of a thermal solar power station to supply reliable power and sell excess power back into the grid. This has been investigated by Council and funding from a private company would be needed.

Water

The town bore has broken off and repairs are budgeted for but not yet done.

Telecommunications

There are large areas without mobile phone coverage and lobbying of Telstra is continuing to improve coverage. Telstra needs to be contacted to fix communication utility holes. Other infrastructure issues are installing lights on the airstrip.

Community Facilities

Walking Track

A walking track is being constructed by the community with Council assistance. About half the track was constructed in 2012. It will be graded with crusher dust and have trees and seats. Exercise equipment is also being incorporated into the walking track. More funding is needed to complete the track and working bees need to be re-started.

River

Facilities have been improved at the river but more tables and chairs are needed.

Waterpark

Residents suggested that the development of a lagoon-style “waterpark” near the town would be a big advantage for both residents and tourists. This has been investigated but is not feasible at this stage.

Aquatic Centre

The development of the pool area should continue with the establishment of a BBQ area and water play equipment and activities for children.

Business***Primary Industry***

Beef production is the major local industry but after a severe drought and with narrow margins, the industry can’t afford to employ many people. This lack of consistent employment limits population and services. The industry is very dependent on trucks and road infrastructure and cattle can only be loaded in Longreach.

The kangaroo industry has closed down significantly reducing employment and income. A demountable pet food processing plant was suggested. This could be an idea that the community pursues or a current business could be attracted to the community.

Light Industry

Residents saw the need for light industry in the district such as a welding works, mechanical repair service etc. Development is limited by no industrial land (or residential land) being available. The nurses’ quarters could possibly be used as a Regional Training Centre for machinery tickets. People felt that industries need to be encouraged and a contract from Council or DTMR would support the development of a business.

Release of Land

Some community members emphasised the need for land to be released for acreage blocks near the town. This would attract retirees, “lifestylers” and others. These residents requested that MCDA and BRC lobby DSDIP to release appropriate land.

Garage

Previous garage services have not been sustained but there is a high level of demand for a local mechanical repair and maintenance service.

Tourism

The Muttaborrasaurus, the medical museum, the shearers strike heritage, the Centre of Queensland, the landscape and the river together made the area potentially very attractive to tourists. It is well positioned in the Central West tourism “circuit” and already attracts a lot of grey nomads. However, many people felt that tourism was in its infancy.

Barcaldine Regional Council has developed a Tourism Plan for the Council area including coordinated promotion, the development of tourism infrastructure etc. Residents suggested that a tourism committee should be formed on Council to include local people from each community. Greater direction and support was also needed for funding applications by communities. The Outback Queensland Tourism Association is a major potential ally in progressing tourism.

Some other suggestions were:

- More accommodation is needed to attract tour buses,
- An information centre for tourism at the Post Office needs to be signposted at the corner in the main street,
- Overcoming difficulties in maintaining volunteer efforts to guide visitors through museums and other attractions.
- More signage is needed about attractions,
- Improve parks and gardens with sculptures etc.,
- The creation of a tourist route to capture Torrens Creek traffic,
- Improving the Union Camp and Hole,
- Establishing an art gallery incorporated into a tourist information centre, cafe and dinosaur centre,
- Featuring Muttaborra characters for tourism,
- Developing Longreach as a hub for fly-drive tourism,
- Improvements to amenities at the river, pumphole and broadwater,

Dinosaur

The Muttaborrasaurus is clearly a major tourist attraction. Muttaborra needs to be the “fourth spoke” in the western Queensland dinosaur trail and funding needs to be gained for a Muttaborrasaurus attraction. Effort is continuing on the development of a Dinosaur Interpretive Centre as a tourist attraction and educational attraction. Muttaborra is not prominent on the Dinosaur Trail and the site of the discovery of the Muttaborrasaurus is on private property.

Some suggestions to progress Dinosaur tourism are:

- Holding a community fundraising event to help funding an interpretive centre,
- Continuing to organise “inside” display materials,
- Establish a Dinosaur themed event to tie in with regional events,
- Clarifying what Muttaborra’s link to Dinosaurs is – it is getting confused with Winton and Richmond,
- Upgrading the landscaping around the statue,

- Improving the current “leg” display with a proper Perspex viewing window and a display from the museum,
- Introducing a Dinosaur theme to the town such as re[painting the footprints, having Muttaborrasaurus specific souvenirs in shops etc.
- Having community branding such as pie stamps, T shirts, and street lightposts. Branding would be accessible for everyone to use. MCDA could develop a concept plan for the town and the project could progress in stages in partnership with the Council.

Caravan Park

The Main Roads camp next to the caravan park is in poor condition and very unattractive for tourists. Generators are creating noise problem. The Main roads camp needs to move to the Council depot where generators would not be needed and the caravan park could be improved as a tourism asset.

Education

Residents felt that the facilities at the school are very good. However, they were concerned about maintaining and increasing student numbers. Relief teachers are coming in but an additional part time teacher would be beneficial.

The school building has being raised and fly proofed and a fence has been built to keep kangaroos out of the school grounds. However, there are a range of other issues that need to be addressed including:

- Installing retaining walls to stop erosion,
- Installing a new cricket pitch,
- Having a grandstand for the oval for the benefit of the whole community,
- Upgrading the tennis courts and installing an additional court,
- Planting tall native trees in the adjoining horse paddock.

Streetscape and Amenity

Many people raised the need to beautify the town. A major issue was untidy private property often due to vacant properties. Council has followed up with landholders to clean up their properties and maintain houses but this needs to be continued.

Signage needs to be updated and improved with an ongoing schedule of maintaining the appearance of signs. Priorities are a large welcoming sign, more information/interpretation signs for visitors and brighter, well maintained signs. School children could be involved in designing and/or preparing appropriate signs.

Jubilee Park needs to be upgraded with better facilities, shade and gardens.

Many people mentioned the need to extend walking tracks and footpaths. Footpaths and kerbing should be installed around the main parts of the town. A walking track around the perimeter of the town with historical signage would encourage exercise and support tourism. Ideally, it would include lighting for walking in the cool at night.

Children and Youth

The community suits families with young children but as children grow older options are limited. The school goes to year 7, there are very few employment opportunities and few organised activities such as scouts or guides. More funding opportunities and visiting programs are needed for activities for children and young people.

Families need access to a kindergarten and playgroups. Nothing is available for children below school age except for Day-care run by mothers.

A skate park is being established beside the pool. This will make it accessible, close to public toilets and in an area comfortable for young people.

Housing

There are a lot of vacant houses in the community but they are unavailable for rent. Ironically, there is demand for more housing and acreage blocks. Yet accommodation is expensive to build or move into the community. Rents are low and it is not viable for an investor to provide housing. This limits the accommodation available for potential new residents. Many houses, particularly vacant ones, require upgrading and maintenance.

It was suggested that Council investigate incentive programs to increase the value of housing to encourage people to invest and maintain housing.

The maintenance of Council and community housing puts an unnecessary burden of Council staff. Simple maintenance, such as changing a light bulb, should be re-negotiated in tenancy agreements as a tenant responsibility.

Sport and Recreation

The community has an active swimming club, pistol club, golf club and campdraft. However, generally, it is difficult to have enough people to drive sport and recreation in a small community.

The MCDA is working on establishing a mini-golf course. There is also local enthusiasm for a shed with gym equipment for the whole community.

Mining and Exploration

Currently there are numerous exploration activities for coal seam gas and conventional petroleum under way in the district. There are currently opportunities in direct employment with the exploration groups. If mining development occurs it could provide significant opportunities for sustainable employment. However, community members are concerned about the impacts of activity already occurring with the deterioration of roads, impact on grazing land and the maintenance of a safe close-knit community.

Community Identity and Engagement

Residents wanted to see communication and engagement with the Council to be maintained and improved. Some people felt that Council needed to respond better to local needs and others felt that residents saw the Council as being responsible for everything and wanted greater personal and community responsibility to develop.

Some suggestions are:

- Maintaining all the existing Council jobs in the community,
- Having greater freedom to access Council staff,
- More open communication of local government information,
- Having greater distribution of the local Council newsletter,
- Having Councillors visit communities across the Council area.

Community Safety

Maintaining a local police officer is important and children at the school requested an Adopt a Cop program. The SES facilities also need upgrading.

Other

Other issues are:

- Having an art and craft shop to support artists,
- Having a QGAP or RTC to better access government services.

Progressing the Community Plan

The community plan is not just a document – it is a set of actions to be implemented. The implementation of the community plan requires ongoing coordinated effort and investment from a range of relevant organisations and groups as identified in the plan. Council has a key role in coordinating the plan on behalf of the community as well as implementing actions that are most relevant to local government.

Clearly, the implementation of the extensive list of actions in the plan will depend on available resources and access to funding. Council and virtually all other organisations have significant limits on resources. While Council lobbies actively to access funds, it competes against many other demands on resources and can't control the priorities and resource allocation of state and federal government and other funding bodies.

Hence, while the plan outlines priorities based on community needs and issues, and every effort will be made to progress actions, not every action may be able to be achieved and the plan can only progress at the pace that available resources allow.