



## Kempsey Shire Council

### Local Community Plan 2009 Gladstone



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## The Vision

*A healthy community is a form of living democracy: people working together to address what matters to them.*

*- Stephen B. Fawcett, et. al*

In 2009, Kempsey Shire Council initiated a local community planning program to engage and work cooperatively with local communities to identify priorities and actions for improvement.

The Local Community Plans aim to make a difference through developing a relationship between communities and Council, solve problems through creative thinking and identify actions to bring about improvements. The foundation of the community plans are the visions and aspirations of the people who live in the Macleay Valley.

The Community Plans commit Council to work with their local communities to identify, promote and enhance the distinctive character of their local areas.

Finally, the Plans will aim to guide the development of partnerships between local communities, community organisations, and Kempsey Shire Council.

## Kempsey Shire Community Strategic Planning Process

The Community Strategic Plan, developed in 2007, set out the long term vision for the whole of Kempsey Shire. The Plan is structured around key focus areas, and encompasses all of Council's actions and responsibilities. The key focus areas are:

- Economic and environmental sustainability
- Social, cultural and community relations
- Infrastructure
- Relationships
- Effectiveness, Efficiency and Accountability

Kempsey Council is now taking its Strategic Plan to the local level through the development of Local Community Plans. These plans have been developed for nine distinctive catchment areas throughout the Macleay Valley. These are Bellbrook, Crescent Head, Frederickton & Collombatti, Smithtown, Gladstone, Hat Head, South West Rocks, Stuarts Point and Willawarrin.

To access other Local Community Plans, go to the Kempsey Shire Council website [www.kempsey.nsw.gov.au](http://www.kempsey.nsw.gov.au)

The local community planning process for all of these catchment areas follows a similar path where the following questions are collectively discussed and responded to:

- Where are we now?
- Where are we going?
- Where do we want to be?
- How do we get there?
- Are we getting there?

## Community Involvement

In 2009, Kempsey Shire Council set out to engage with local communities to identify the hopes, ideals and needs of the local residents that live in Gladstone.

The consultation included a community workshop and online survey with the local community. Many issues and suggestions were raised during the consultations, and resulted in the formation of common visions and identified actions to meet the needs of the future Gladstone community.

Council will respond to the community needs in a number of ways:

- Directly on planning matters and policy direction
- Directly as a service provider
- Collaboratively through partnerships with the community
- Indirectly as an advocate for the community

Community suggestions that have been incorporated into the Local Community Plans will be the subject of further and ongoing dialogue and cooperation between Council and the community. Council will hold community workshops in the future to review and monitor the outcomes and success of the Local Community Plans.

## Get Involved

Kempsey Council looks forward to your involvement in the implementation of these Local Community Plans. Contributions or suggestions should be directed to Kempsey Shire Council on 6566 3200.

## Gladstone in Focus

### Gladstone Today

- Gladstone is a welcoming and accommodating town within the whole of the Valley where all people in the valley can gather.
- A number of long term residents still reside in the village.
- The village exhibits strong ownership of community assets
- Many people live at Gladstone and work at the Nestle factory in nearby Smithtown.
- The local pool and hall are at the centre of social activity.
- 22 businesses are located within the community.
- Gladstone is the service centre for the surrounding rural area.
- It is a conservative farming community.
- Two streets of the village are heritage listed.

### History

Gladstone is a small village located on the Macleay River opposite Smithtown. Originally Gladstone was a commercial centre. From its wharves, that once existed, passengers and freight destined for Austral Eden, the Belmore River, Kinchela, Kinchela Creek and other lower river areas were landed or dispatched.

Today Gladstone has retained a number of its historical buildings and has increasingly become the cultural centre for the Macleay region. The village is the home of the Macleay Valley Community Gallery.

### Population

The population of Gladstone was 366 in 2006, declining 6.9 percent since 2001. The declining population is a result of a drop in birth rates and an ageing population, with Gladstone ageing over twice as fast as Kempsey Shire.

This rapid ageing of the Gladstone population has meant there has been increasing pressure on the economically active population to support this dependent segment of the population. In Gladstone in 2006 there were 70 dependents (those aged over 65, and under 15 years) per 100 members of the population between 15 and 65 years old. This is slightly less for Kempsey Shire, which was 63.7.

### Education

Levels of youth high school education are comparable between Gladstone and Kempsey Shire with about 75% having completed at least to year 10.

## Economy and Employment

The 2001 and 2006 censuses indicate the population of Gladstone is employed in increasingly diverse industries. Whilst the participation in primary industries, construction, wholesale trade, electricity and property and business may be declining; hospitality, health, community services and education are all increasing.

## Income and Affordability

Average family and household incomes are slightly more than those of Kempsey Shire and average housing loan repayments and weekly rents are also higher, indicating greater housing affordability in Kempsey Shire.

## Services

Gladstone supports a public primary school, public hall, swimming pool, police station, and has several retail outlets (including a butcher and grocery store) as well as several boutique businesses, in addition to the art gallery and agricultural supplies businesses.

For most services and facilities, residents must travel to Kempsey. A bus enroute to South West Rocks operates three times a day on weekdays, but has no weekend services.

In 2006, 5% of households in Gladstone were without at least one vehicle and over 62% travelled to work by car as a driver or passenger. A similar proportion of persons in Kempsey Shire and Gladstone worked from home or walked to work.

## What do the community love about living in Gladstone?

- The heritage of the area.
- Gladstone's proximity to major service centres.
- The quiet and serene nature of the area.
- The businesses and services that are located in Gladstone.
- It's a dynamic place, but change is gradual.
- The sense of community and community spirit.
- The cultural life through the galleries, markets, pub and shops.
- It's a great place to live for families with young children.
- Lack of crime.
- The quality and importance of the role the school plays in the community.

## What are the challenges for Gladstone?

- Speeding cars along key streets in town.
- The quality of roads and road surfaces.
- Limited bus travel.
- Limited employment opportunities for young people.
- Can be difficult to get more community members participating in community events.
- Poor drainage.
- Disorderly behaviour in some areas.



## What changes have been seen in Gladstone in the last few years?

- Gladstone has been a key part of the Bypass Strategy which has focused on attracting people off the highway.
- Increase in tourism.
- Upgrading community facilities.
- Increase in people moving from Sydney into the area.
- Gladstone is seen as 'The jewel in the crown for the Lower Macleay'.

## Community Visions for Gladstone

The community workshop and feedback session that were held in Gladstone drew out the common community visions for the future of the area. Below is an overview of the community vision, and the community suggestions for action.

*“Safe, caring and small”*

*“Keep the heritage atmosphere”*

*“Attractive approaches to Gladstone”*

*“Small, yet vibrant town”*

*“Grow as a tourist destination”*

### Community suggestions to be considered

Community vision	Community suggestions to be considered
Retain current community value and feel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain the school and the Police Station which are at the heart of the village</li> <li>• Encourage young families to the area</li> <li>• Increase community participation</li> <li>• Maintain and retain the Anglican and Uniting churches which are important to the community and generates economic activity</li> </ul>
Increasing Gladstone’s profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase local and highway signage (pre and post bypass)</li> <li>• Investigate how to get a Heritage symbol on town signs</li> </ul>
Economic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Maker’s Market committee could potentially become a driver of economic development</li> <li>• The tourist drive needs upgrading to encourage visitors into Gladstone</li> <li>• Provide support to the newly established Chamber of Commerce for Gladstone</li> <li>• Advocate for the provision of an outreach chemist service to Gladstone and Smithtown</li> </ul>
Improve public transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop the wharf to encourage boating</li> <li>• Public transport needs assessing</li> </ul>

Community vision	Community suggestions to be considered
Emergency response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage the recruitment of volunteers to the Lower Macleay SES for activation in the case of an emergency</li> <li>• Investigate drainage issues in Verge Street, Gladstone</li> </ul>
Bypass Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor the impact of the Bypass on rural properties surrounding Gladstone in terms of flood mitigation and passing trade for businesses</li> </ul>
Recreation and community facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrade parks to include more playground facilities, fencing, shading, picnic tables and compliance with OHS standards whilst retaining the trees with in the park</li> <li>• Events or activities on the river or park would be ideal for Australia Day celebrations including Australia Day activities and regattas</li> <li>• An information board on the general area would be useful. Consultation and collaboration with local businesses would be the key</li> <li>• The Heritage walk pamphlet needs a map for Gladstone</li> <li>• Check that sporting facilities are well utilised and suitable</li> <li>• Improve consultation with young people to foster their involvement and inclusion in community activities</li> <li>• Investigate the provision of a skate park at the sports fields</li> <li>• Consider heating the local swimming pool</li> </ul>

## The Plan

The Plan has been developed from the outcomes of the community consultation undertaken during 2009. The Plan highlights specific actions to be implemented in order for the community visions to be reached. The timeframe for the plan is 2009 – 2012. Priority ratings were allocated according to the community's view on how urgently actions needed to be addressed. The priority ratings that have been given to actions are as follows:

- Low Priority - action commenced within 4 years
- Medium Priority – action commenced within 2 years
- High Priority – action commenced with 1 year

The Council role will vary from action to action. The Council role will be one of the following:

- Direct involvement through the provision of services and/or infrastructure
- A collaboration role by teaming with the community and/or relevant industry organisations
- An advocacy role by speaking on the behalf of the community to relevant groups and bodies.







