Social Impact

Sutherland Shire

Environmental Specification

2007
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1. Introduction

This Environmental Specification contains detailed requirements relating to the evaluation of social impacts. Certain types of development can interfere with the character of localities, impact on the quality of life of communities, or encourage anti-social behaviour. Social impact assessment aims to ensure that the relationship of new development to existing development on adjoining or nearby land adequately addresses the potential social implications. This specification should be read in conjunction with the objectives and controls contained within Sutherland Shire Development Control Plan 2006.

2. Evaluating Social Impacts

Social Impact Assessment and Social Impact Comment are required by Council to assist in predicting, identifying, understanding and dealing with the possible social impacts of new development. The analysis may recommend management strategies to ensure a socially acceptable outcome is achieved. By undertaking a social impact evaluation, systematic and rigorous analysis is undertaken of the likely social effects of development on the people living and working within a community. Both Social Impact Assessment and Social Impact Comment assist in predicting and evaluating changes in the social structure of communities. The involvement of the local community is often required to assist in understanding the full range of impacts and the needs of people most affected.

2.1 Social Impact Comment

Social Impact Comment is a basic level of examination of the anticipated social impacts of new development. Social Impact Comment involves a critical review of potential social impacts. This assessment need not be undertaken by a specialist consultant, but can be prepared by the applicant or landowner. It should take into account the neighbours, tenants, existing and potential users and the wider communities’ needs and understanding of the proposed development. It should address all relevant issues and points of consideration outlined in this Specification and in Chapter 11 of SSDCP 2006.

2.2 Social Impact Assessment

Social Impact Assessment is a more rigorous level of analysis of the anticipated social impacts of new development. The Social Impact Assessment is a key component of the development application. The assessment should address all relevant issues and points of consideration outlined in this Specification and in Chapter 11 of SSDCP 2006.
Applicants are advised to consult with Council staff prior to the preparation of this assessment to ensure that all relevant issues are appropriately explored. Community consultation and appropriate studies are also to be undertaken to support the submission.


3.1 Development requiring mandatory social impact evaluation

The table below lists some examples and identifies what form of social impact evaluation is required for certain forms of development. There may be instances where development types not listed in this table may warrant some form of social impact assessment due to the local circumstances, or where a greater level of assessment is necessary to adequately examine the issues for a particular development. The requirements of this table should therefore be regarded as the minimum mandatory requirements for social impact evaluation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities requiring Social Impact Comment</th>
<th>Activities requiring Social Impact Assessment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Backpackers’ accommodation</td>
<td>Entertainment facility</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boarding house</td>
<td>Brothel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Childcare centre</td>
<td>Correctional centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community facility</td>
<td>Development that would result in</td>
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<tr>
<td>Educational establishment</td>
<td>the closure of, or changes to, a</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group home</td>
<td>boarding house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniors housing</td>
<td>Hotel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Motel</td>
<td>Medical facility</td>
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<tr>
<td>Place of assembly</td>
<td>New urban areas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Place of public worship</td>
<td>Nightclub</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recreation facility</td>
<td>Offensive industry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service station</td>
<td>Hazardous industry</td>
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<td>Passenger transport facility</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Registered club</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Residential development (50+ dwellings)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sex shop</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tourist facility</td>
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<td>Waste recycling and management centre</td>
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3.2 Other forms of development which may require Social Impact Evaluation

Various types of development may produce social impacts. To determine whether social impact evaluation is required applicants should answer the following questions. If the answer to any of these questions is “YES” or “POSSIBLY”, the issue will need to be addressed through Social Impact
Comment or Social Impact Assessment as part of the development assessment process:

(a) Will the proposal significantly increase or reduce the number of persons working, living or using the site?

(b) Will the proposal disadvantage or benefit any particular group in the community?

(c) Will the proposal be likely to give riser to an increase or to a decrease in employment opportunities in the locality?

(d) Will the proposal have a significant impact on the existing housing stock in the locality, particularly low cost rental housing?

(e) Will the proposal impact upon existing community meeting places or give rise to an increased demand for community facilities or services in the locality?

(f) Will on-site support services be required?

(g) Is the proposal likely to give rise to increased conflict in the community or adversely impact upon community identity?

(h) Is the proposal likely to enhance or detract from the cultural life of the community?

(i) Will the proposal create areas of risk for occupants or pedestrians within or adjacent to the development?

(j) Is the proposal likely to give rise to an increased community concern regarding public safety?

4. Social Impact Considerations

4.1 Social Issues which may be affected by new development

There are a number of possible social impacts that may occur with a development. These issues should be considered in the design phase and during the social impact assessment process. Where a negative impact is anticipated, steps should then be taken to minimise the impact as much as possible. Issues to consider include:

- Access (disabled) and mobility;
- Accommodation and housing including low cost and affordable housing;
- Community structure;
- Crime and safety;
- Culture and community values;
- Employment;
- Health;
- Interaction between the new development and the existing community.
- Local economic effects;
- Needs of social groups (women, aged, persons with a disability, children, young people and ethnic groups);
- Population change (size and characteristics);
- Recreation facilities;
- Residential amenity and quality of life;
- Risk perception and fear of crime in the community;
- Social equity (displacement, needs of disadvantaged groups);
- Indigenous issues such as proximity to Aboriginal sites.

Some of the possible social impacts may be dealt with briefly, while others may require more discussion in a social impact evaluation. Both positive and negative impacts need to be considered as well as the extent of the impact. If you believe the impact is not relevant you must say so in your submission and justify your reasons. The following questions may assist in your evaluation:

- How significant is it (major, minor)?
- What is the extent of the impact (geography, time, safety)?
- Who may be affected by it?
- What can be done to limit the negative impacts?
- What can be done to enhance the positive impacts?

### 4.2 Matters for consideration for specific activities

The table below provides a summary of matters which applicants must consider when preparing a social impact evaluation. This list is not exhaustive but provides points of consideration for applicants in the range of matters Council would expect to be included when assessing the social impacts of new development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Development</th>
<th>Possible Impacts On</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential Developments</td>
<td>Existing community services</td>
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<td>Community safety</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Demography and land use change</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Residential amenity and quality of life</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Employment rates</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Local economic development</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Industry</td>
<td>Demography</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Community services and facilities</td>
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<td>Community health and safety</td>
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<td>Employment access and opportunities</td>
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<td>Local economic development</td>
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<td>Road traffic system</td>
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<td>Property values</td>
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<td>Land use</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Amenity and quality of life</td>
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<td>Safety and security</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Noise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commercial development</td>
<td>Demography</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Land use patterns</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Community values and amenity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Employment access and opportunities</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
5.0 Stages of Social Impact Assessment

The following stages of Social Impact Assessment are to be used as a guide in the preparation of your submission:

5.1 Scoping

Scoping is the initial phase of Social Impact Assessment and identifies potential social impacts at the earliest stage. Effective scoping enables the development of strategies and mechanisms that improve outcomes and provide solutions to likely social impacts.

The following questions will assist in initiating your scoping phase.
What are the issues typically associated with development of this type?
What impacts are typically associated with the location of the development?
What is the context, boundaries and likely areas of impact?
Who are the affected individuals, group or communities to involve in the assessment process?

This first step involves establishing the range of issues to be considered and the geographical reach of possible impacts. It will identify the likely scale and timing of impacts, communities affected and the information required to be collected.

Potential social impacts should be identified and a process commenced to address them. Community participation techniques could be used at this stage.

5.2 Involving the Community in the Scoping Phase

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

Community participation can ensure full disclosure at the outset on the range of issues that may be significant. This will ensure a thorough consideration of the issues and all opposing views.

Community participation must be undertaken that provides every opportunity for all relevant issues to be identified and all interested groups to be involved. Community participation enables the proponent, residents and community groups, including the less articulate groups, to be involved in the process. The main purpose of community participation is to provide relevant accessible information.

It is essential that information be presented in a format that is understood by the affected community. It may be necessary to translate information into community languages or involve the use of advisers to explain technical issues in plain English.

At this stage of the process, Council requires public participation to involve the community in the identification of issues.

5.3 Profiling

Profiling is used to identify what the current area is like. Consideration is to be given to the categories identified in the Social Impact Checklist and those contained in the scoping phase.

A Social Impact Assessment will provide some form of social profile of the local area. This profile will draw on the issues identified in the scoping phase. There is extensive data available from various government departments that will assist in the development of the profile.

The profile should include relevant statistical data as well as descriptions of community groups and networks and significant cultural issues. Consult Sutherland Shire Council’s Social Plan as a guide for more detailed information.

5.4 Development Alternatives

What are the development options or proposals for change? These should be discussed in detail and include community input.

- Projecting and Estimating Effects
- Examine in detail the impacts of the options
- Develop options to manage/minimise the negative impacts.

A good Social Impact Assessment will consider options that minimise impact to the community and include a discussion of these. This information can assist Council in the approval process as it shows the applicant has considered all options and provides some guidance for the issuing of consent.
5.5 Assessment by Council

Council needs to carefully consider the points raised in the Social Impact Assessment and:

- Ensure that all impacts have been identified and addressed. If this is not the case Council may request further detail from the applicant.

- Ensure the applicant provides alternatives and options to address any negative impacts.

- Consider whether the development should be approved in light of its social impact.

Council may need to complete its own impact assessment on certain areas of the development. If the Council cannot support the development, the process may be finalised at this stage by refusal of the development application.

If Council decides to proceed, the next stage/step of the Social Impact Assessment process is undertaken – impact management. Impact management is when the mechanisms identified through the Social Impact Assessment Process are implemented to manage the anticipated social impact of the development.