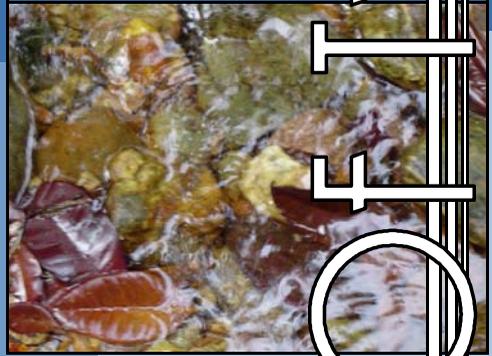




UPDATE
2003



STATE OF THE SHIRE

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MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

Johnstone Shire Council is proud to display our continued commitment to state of the environment reporting, with this year's release of the State of the Shire Update.

2003 was a busy year, with a many changes affecting our lives in the Shire. Most were positive steps forward, but there have also been some challenges requiring the community's attention. On the whole, there has been steady progress towards making the Shire demonstrate the best it has to offer.

This booklet is based on triple bottom line reporting, so it describes the Environments of Society, Economy and Ecology.

Each of these is interdependent upon the others; for the State of the Shire to be vibrant there has to be a balance between all. It is Council's role to lead the community to achieve this balance. The Council's plans are based on this strategy of sustainability—to ensure that resources and opportunities are accessible to all today, but also indefinitely into the future.

People today are the guardians of the future, for the sake of our children and their children, and for the quality of life we will provide for them. This is the simple truth that forms the core of Council's philosophy for the public good.

Achieving the public good in the face of complex situations from day to day is the challenge that Council answers, as a leader and as a representative of the Shire's every person, including their successors.

The State of the Shire Report is Council's commitment to demonstrating this achievement. It has the purpose of helping us to plan, and to respond when problems become evident. The report maintains a record of the state of the environment, so we can see when there are changes. The report is also a demonstration of our public transparency, to each of our employers—the members of the community.

I hope that you will enjoy and find informative this year's State of the Shire Update.

Yours faithfully,

Cr. Neil Clarke.



Cr. Neil Clarke
2004 Mayor

CITIZEN OF THE YEAR—DORIS PALMER

Doris Palmer was awarded the citizen of the year for her tireless community work as a member of the Baptist Church in Innisfail. She is known locally as the 'Short-bread Queen' for baking 26,000 short-bread biscuits which were sold for the church charity. The biscuits were baked from home in a conventional oven, and required 185 pounds of butter (84 kilograms).

Aside from raising funds, Mrs Palmer also puts together presents for the shoebox ministry. These shoeboxes contain clothes and toys and are sent to orphans around the world. Her time is also spent knitting soft bandages for people with Hansen's disease.

Doris bakes meals, and helps with the housework when there are occasions of need for families or individuals in the community.

At the age of 82 Doris is an inspiring example of a person's capacity for community involvement. She is also a feisty and formidable spirit, as anyone who has had their fingers bruised in a handshake with her can tell you. She only reluctantly gave up her motorcycle licence at the age of 80.

Doris has lived in the Shire for five years now and has grown to love the tropical environment. She thinks people should take care of their home, by keeping the Shire free of litter and the drains clear of pollution like oils and grass clippings. She would like to see attractive trees planted to beautify the towns, and encourages people to utilise the parks and green spaces for barbecues and recreation. At Coquette Point Mrs Palmer would like to see a lookout built, so that tourists and locals alike can enjoy the view of the Johnstone River.



Photo courtesy of the Innisfail Advocate.

INTRODUCTION TO THE 2003 UPDATE

Environmental reporting provides public access to information on issues affecting the Shire's Community, Natural systems, and Economy. It is recognised today that these three aspects are interconnected, affecting one another and together creating the whole of our Environment.

Therefore, a pressure on one aspect of the Environment will usually have further implications. Our responses to fixing a negative condition in the Environment must be balanced with the potential further implications.

The 2003 Update includes this Pressure, Condition, Response, & Implications model throughout. The goal is to understand how best to balance the human activities that occur in the Shire, in order to ensure that our natural, community and economic systems are all sustainable in the long-term.

The 2003 Update continues the development of environmental indicators - which are data and figures reflecting the severity of a problem, or simply monitoring the natural state of a system. This year's indicators are comparable to the indicators in the last Updates—so we can see if there have been any positive or negative changes.

Additionally, the booklet describes the progress achieved since the 2000 State of the Shire Benchmark; which set out goals for the community. 2003 was the last year for completing these goals. A new benchmark and goals will be presented next year.

Progress since the 2000 benchmark is set out as a report card for each chapter. The criteria are:

- Action on the 2000 Benchmark recommendations.
- Filling deficiencies in data
- The State of the Shire
- Goal achievement
- Community awareness

You will notice that the report card is rated from A to F; the ratings are described here.

A—(Excellent) A high level of progress or achievement.

B—(Good) Progress and achievement

C—(Normal) No real changes beyond what was already in place. Normal effort.

D—(Poor) Slackening of established practices. No effort.

F—(Fail) Worsening of the State of the Shire.

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