

ABBREVIATED FINAL REPORT
to the
Franklin Harbour Community Development Group

A COMMUNITY PLAN
FOR
FRANKLIN HARBOUR AND DISTRICTS

A WORKING TOWNS INITIATIVE

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2. Executive Summary

Franklin Harbour and Districts into the Year 2020 – Building A Vision Splendid
The recently formed Franklin Harbour Community Development Group are a hard working and innovative bunch, committed to building a strong economic, social and environmental framework for the district of Franklin Harbour, with the capacity to support future growth and prosperity.

Possessing the will invariably leads to searching for the way, and an approach was made to the Eyre Regional Development Board for advice and assistance. Support was duly given.

A funding application was made under the Working Towns program, a small town revitalisation initiative sponsored by the Office of Employment and Youth.

Their submission was successful in securing a modest grant, subsidised by the District Council of Franklin Harbour.

The Working Towns funding was granted on the basis that a community development plan be undertaken, with the recommendation that a consultant be engaged to implement the preliminary draft plan.

Tenders were called in March 2001 and Vance Thomas & Associates were subsequently engaged to undertake this project. This Eyre Peninsula based consultancy specialises in marketing and developing regional Australia, with recent experience including the *Cummins on Track* campaign and *Minnipa – Building a Rock Solid Community with a Heart of Gold* initiative.

The township of Cowell on picturesque Franklin Harbour

The Consultant makes no apology for the fact that at times this document may appear to be “stating the patently bloody obvious!”

The fact of the matter is that the level of awareness about the district of Franklin Harbour is relatively low at the state level, even lower at the national level and insignificant in a global context.

Therefore if this exercise is to be a truly successful one, the finished product must be capable of doing two things:

Franklin Harbour and Districts into the Year 2020 – Building A Vision Splendid
The primary thrust of this initiative is to come up with an innovative, achievable and credible blueprint designed to facilitate growth, prosperity and lifestyle in the district of Franklin Harbour. The plan must have credibility both within the local community and to key stakeholders further afield.

Secondly, the document must be capable of selling Cowell and its satellite communities to the outside world. Therefore it must have a strong marketing component in the message it delivers - by word, by figure and by picture:

- It must be able to inform and motivate other groups or organisations of like object
- It must not only identify opportunities in business, industry, community services and lifestyle pursuits, but also the infrastructure gaps that need to be plugged to realise those opportunities
- It needs to properly represent the district's tourism product
- It must deliver the right message to the politicians and the media
- It needs to do a sales job on faraway bureaucrats handing out grants and subsidies in State and Federal agencies
- It needs to set the district of Franklin Harbour apart from a hundred similarly positioned towns across Australia
- Wherever possible, it needs to paint a positive picture about the Franklin Harbour district as a place to live, work and play.

The success or failure of this initiative will probably come down to four key elements:

The Plan
The People
The Projects
The Pot

The importance of getting the locals behind this project cannot be understated. Community consultation breeds ownership. Ownership brings commitment. Commitment generates results.

Vision, leadership, commitment, perseverance, innovation, imagination, generosity, and the willingness to strive for the common good, are all qualities that exist in above average amounts in small country towns across Eyre Peninsula.

The real challenge is to harness those qualities and have them all pulling in the one direction.

It would also be true to say that more community based initiatives such as this have failed due to too many chiefs and not enough indians.

The pot refers to the working capital needed to finance some of the development initiatives that are sure to come out of the community consultation process.

Both State and Federal Governments have a diverse and confusing array of community and development programs, however they tend to hide their light under a bushel.

Tracking down a program with the criteria/guidelines that may provide a specific project with grant or subsidy funding can be at best a frustrating exercise in futility, and at worse, an absolute nightmare.

It is the intention of this consultancy to identify funding opportunities across a broad range of community and economic development programs.

And the timing could not be better – with State and Federal elections imminent, the political focus on rural and regional Australia augurs well for the Franklin Harbour community development initiative.

The final shape and direction of these initiatives will be determined and fine-tuned as part of the community consultation process.

However I have no doubt that some of the following will figure in the final shortlist:

- Development of a jade and aquaculture focal point for Franklin Harbour's tourist product. (eg aquaculture/ecotourism/fishing cruises of Franklin Harbour, multi-purpose Jade Interpretative Centre/Tourist Information/Transaction Centre, Coastal Ketches Scenic Drive etc)
- Implementation of an innovative tourism marketing campaign to lift general level of awareness about local tourist attractions and facilities, as well as to promote existing and new tourist activity.
- Investigation into feasibility of staging special events and festivals, with particular emphasis on those with a seafood or jade theme.
- Campaign to target the two hundred thousand vehicles passing through Cowell each year
- Exploration of strategies to retain and entertain the youth of the district
- Implementation of town beautification initiatives, including northern and southern entrances.
- Development of competitive information technology, including Telecentre.
- Needs analysis for future housing and land demand for Cowell/Franklin Harbour
- Encouragement of farmers to form self help action groups to access training and technical advice, enhance business skills, value adding and sustainable farming technologies
- Value adding the aquaculture product.
- An innovative campaign to staunch the flow of retail dollars out of the local community.
- Practical training workshops and advice for local businesses.
- A pro-active approach to your ageing community – a growth industry.
- Development of strategies to source funding from State & Federal regional programs.
- Investigation into wind power generation and other greenhouse friendly energies
- Putting Franklin Harbour onto the World Wide Web
- Investigation of the feasibility of establishing a Regional Research Centre
- Major upgrade of directional and interpretative signage
- Development of stronger linkages with other regional playmakers (Council, ERDB, EPLGA, EPTA, EPNRM, SACAT, Local Members of Parliament, EP Water Catchment Board, Flinders Region Area Consultative Committee etc.)
- Consolidation of district's infrastructure (school/hospital/sport & recreation/information technology/roads/power/water etc)

Over a quarter of all visitors come to Eyre Peninsula to catch a fish

To some degree, Franklin Harbour has ultimately become a victim of its own efficiency.

Over the past several decades, Eyre Peninsula has observed a contraction in the number of people employed in agriculture, as economic necessity has witnessed the trend towards larger and larger farms, combined with significant advances in farming methods and equipment/chemical technology. At the same time the level of productivity in Eyre Peninsula's biggest industry has increased considerably.

Fortunately Franklin Harbour has realistic potential to diversify its economic base, with a particular focus on aquaculture, tourism, jade, and maximising the retail and service opportunity of the two hundred thousand vehicles that pass through the district each year.

Franklin Harbour - best little coastal community this side of the Black Stump

6. An Innovative Blueprint for Franklin Harbour & Districts

55 PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS TOWARDS BUILDING A PROSPEROUS AND MORE RESILIENT FRANKLIN HARBOUR

INTRODUCTION

The image of country towns across regional/rural Australia has taken a hammering over the past decade.

Sadly, there are a large number of small rural communities free-falling into a downward spiral from which they are unlikely to recover.

Not so, Cowell and districts!

The district of Franklin Harbour has five significant advantages on which it can build a future. In the jargon of the marketing professionals, these are often called Critical Success Factors:

1. It has a strong agricultural sector that traditionally has contributed a sizeable and stable chunk towards the local economy. It should continue to do so.
Additional opportunities exist in the fields of value adding, niche marketing, specialisation, GMO-free product, horticulture and bush tucker.
It is significant to note that on a per capita basis, Franklin Harbour wheat growers are the most efficient on Eyre Peninsula.
2. Unlike many country towns of similar size, Cowell has a second primary industry with significant potential for wealth generation and job creation. That industry is aquaculture.
3. The Franklin Harbour district has a third string to its economic bow in tourism. In tourism terms, this industry could be described as a sleeper. Already this popular little coastal resort has a reputation for delightful coastal scenery, beautiful beaches and great fishing.
However considerable opportunity exists to further develop the local tourist product to a point where it becomes a “must see/must stay” destination on Eyre Peninsula’s east coast.

The multiplier effect of tourism expenditure will have a flow-on effect to local business and employment generation.

4. Cowell is located midway between two cities on a national highway. Ergo there is a huge amount of “foreign capital” being carried through town each and every day of the year. The provision of decent facilities for the motorist, beautification of town approaches, innovative marketing & signage and an upgraded package of tourist attractions, a healthy percentage of these highway travellers will be encouraged to stop and spend.
5. Finally, the character and commitment of the local community.

No doubt a legacy of the district’s early history, where isolation and challenge has developed a strong vein of independence, perseverance and a practical approach to problem-solving.

These traits are still evident in the community of Franklin Harbour today.

In educational parlance, the 3Rs refer to “reading”, “riting” and “rithmetic”.

In the case of the people of Franklin Harbour, it means resourceful, resilient and resolute.

“HOW TO” HANDY HINTS

It was never the intention that this blueprint should comprise a series of obscure or generic recommendations that at best will stimulate a bit of mild interest in the local community, at worst, gather dust on a shelf.

Some of the recommendations apply to initiatives that are of a simple and immediate nature, others are more ambitious in their scope and will be implemented over a longer timeframe.

Each recommendation is described in simple layperson’s terms.

Collectively the proposals outlined in this plan may appear daunting. Individually, they can be broken down into less intimidating chunks and “do-able” components.

Invariably, the most difficult tasks are where to start, who to talk to and what help is available?

A fresh new approach has been adopted in the presentation of the recommendations recorded in the pages to follow, hopefully to ensure that the pages of this document are covered in sweaty finger marks rather than dust!

Firstly, recommendations will be recorded in simple unambiguous language on a thematic basis.

Secondly, strategic elements of the plan will be accompanied by a series of dot points giving first steps, practical instructions, or “how to” tips to help you on the way.

These handy hints will be recorded in italics.

BUILDING BETTER BRIDGES

It is absolutely critical for the Franklin Harbour Community Development Group to reinforce its credibility and resolve if it hopes to successfully implement a Plan of this magnitude.

In other words, there is a marketing job to be done.

There is a relatively simple mechanism to be employed to get Franklin Harbour’s message across to the broader community and into the political arena. For the purpose of this exercise, we will call this mechanism “Building Better Bridges”.

The Futures Forum identified that Franklin Harbour cannot insulate/isolate itself from the rest of the world, and needs to integrate its efforts with organisations of like object.

Three such organisations would be the District Council of Franklin Harbour, the Eyre Regional Development Board and Tourism Eyre Peninsula.

In the former case, the District Council has been elected to provide leadership, representation and advocacy for the Franklin Harbour community.

Of the recommendations to follow, few will be realised without the cooperation and commitment of Council, therefore strong communication links between the two groups will be absolutely essential.

Likewise, the core charter of the Eyre Regional Development Board is to facilitate economic development and to generate employment across the Eyre region.

The Board can not only assist in the area of business/industry development and job creation, but also is also a rich source of intelligence about government programs and funding opportunities.

The award winning Tourism Eyre Peninsula plays a significant role in the marketing and promotion of Eyre Peninsula as a tourist destination, with the capacity to assist and advise local communities with bona fide tourist product.

More importantly, this organisation recently added development to its repertoire, and can now provide practical and professional assistance in the field of development of the tourist product.

RECOMMENDATION 1

That a **letter of declaration** (with a brochure summarising the key features and strategies of the Franklin Harbour Community Development Plan in simple layperson's language) be forwarded to the regional, state and national organisations & agencies recorded in the sixth chapter of this document.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Similarly, that a **media campaign** targeting the regional and metropolitan media be undertaken to both promote the core messages and recommendations of the Plan, as well as to generate a heightened level of awareness about Cowell as a strong and vibrant country community.

RECOMMENDATION 3

That the Franklin Harbour Community Development Group should provide a copy of the Final Draft of the Community Development Plan to the **District Council of Franklin Harbour**, and schedule an early meeting with Executive Staff and Elected Members to build strong communication links, discuss key recommendations and plans for implementation.

RECOMMENDATION 4

That the Community Development Group program an early forum with key officers of the **Eyre Regional Development Board** to explore opportunities to implement economic development, job creation and fundraising elements of the Plan.

RECOMMENDATION 5

Similarly, early dialogue needs to be established with **Tourism Eyre Peninsula** to enlist their advice and support to further develop Cowell tourist attractions and amenities, in areas of marketing, promotion and product development.

RECOMMENDATION 6

It is equally as important to keep the district community informed about the progress of the Cowell Working Towns initiative, so it is absolutely essential that the locals continue to receive regular updates through a computer generated newsletter "**Cowell Communiqué**" or similar. It is recommended that this publication be produced twice yearly.

MORE STEAM IN THE ENGINE ROOM

The life of this community development initiative is likely to be a relatively short one if the decisions made on the bridge cannot be converted into more steam in the engine room.

Without exception, it is busy and dedicated people who provide the driving force behind organisations such as the Franklin Harbour Community Development Group.

The early days of this campaign will be driven along by its own wave of excitement, challenge and activity. Invariably, the lion's share of the workload falls back on a dedicated few. People with families, people with businesses to run and people with recreational and sporting pursuits.

Without intervention or remedial action, burnout of these key community players is inevitable.

RECOMMENDATION 7

In order to reduce the incidence of burnout and to ensure that the momentum of this community-based initiative is maintained, it is recommended that a number of sub-groups be established to supplement the work of the main Committee.

It is logical that these working groups be sector or project focused.

In anticipated order of priority, it is suggested that **Tourism, Business & Industry, Sport & Recreation, Youth Affairs and Health & Education Working Parties** be established as the need arises.

RECOMMENDATION 8

The recommendations made in this document have the capacity to make a real and lasting difference to the future of Franklin Harbour district. However, their implementation will generate a workload beyond the capacity of a voluntary Committee, irrespective of all the goodwill and commitment in the world.

Therefore, at a very early stage in the implementation of this project, it is strongly recommended that every opportunity be explored to source funds to employ and accommodate a **Community Development Officer**.

TOURISM

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

In the public consultation process, recommendations and suggestions to generate increased levels of visitation to the district outnumbered all other categories by a factor of more than two to one.

Based on these findings, the community of Franklin Harbour see tourism as an important building block in their future, in terms of both generation of economic activity and job creation.

The challenge is to establish a critical mass of tourist attractions and features that have the capacity to transform Cowell & Districts from a reactive holiday destination to a proactive one.

This task could be tackled one project at a time, or in a package that would effectively raise the tourist profile of the district of Franklin Harbour overnight.

The latter course of action is recommended. Not only would this strategy deliver rapid economic benefits to the local tourist and retail sector, but it would be far more likely to excite the imagination (and advice and support) of regional and state tourism agencies. Similarly, the likelihood of sourcing state or federal funding would be enhanced if the “total makeover” approach were adopted.

It is conceded that with current corporate status of Gemstone Corporation of Australia, there may be some complications in developing a world class Cowell Jade Interpretative Centre. In the opinion of this Consultant, none of these obstacles are insurmountable.

Irrespective, better delivery of the jade experience to the visitor is seen as an integral element of the Franklin Harbour tourist package, with particular relevance to the Adelaide, interstate and overseas markets, and should be pursued with vigour.

RECOMMENDATION 9

Those preliminary investigations be undertaken forthwith, to develop **a multi-purpose visitor facility** on a prominent location on Lincoln Highway featuring one or more of the following tourist attractions:

- ~ Jade Interpretative Centre
- ~ Tourist Information Centre
- ~ Franklin Harbour Centre for Aquaculture
- ~ Commercial Outlet for Oyster/Finfish Sales
- ~ Telecentre/Rural Transaction Centre*

“How to” hints

- *Initial contact be made with Tourism Eyre Peninsula’s Product Development Officer Shaun de Bruyn to facilitate arrangements with the South Australian Tourism Commission. (Refer Page 51 for contact details.*
- *Key stakeholders identified at South Australian Tourism Commission*

*Andrew McEvoy
Michael Geddes*

*General Manager Marketing, SA Tourism Commission
General Manger Development, SA Tourism Commission*

Karen Nelson-Field Destination Development Manager, SA Tourism Commission

- *Cowell Jade Centre should be of international standard, ideally featuring some of the following:*

The story of jade from early Chinese to modern day (static and audio displays) Refer National Geographic feature – “Jade Stone of Heaven” Volume 172 No.3.

The history of Cowell Jade

Creative use of audio visual displays

Craftspeople working jade

Jade artefacts and souvenirs for sale

Tours of the jade mining areas

Further exploration of commercial applications for jade product (Refer Eyre Regional Development Board.)

- *Early negotiation should take place with Gemstone Corporation of Australia to secure an ongoing supply of black and green jade and access to the jade leases.*
- *Similarly, preliminary negotiations should commence with the District Council of Franklin Harbour in search of a suitable site.*
- *On current levels of visitation, it is dubious whether any one of the above initiatives could stand alone. A multi-faceted facility however would not only be likely to stop tourists in their tracks, but also be extremely cost and staff effective. Aggregation of resources (ie Telecentre and Rural Transaction Centre funding) may ultimately determine whether this major tourist hook is to be or not to be.*
- *As funding has already been secured under the Networking the Nation program to establish a Cowell Telecentre, early dialogue with the District Council of Franklin Harbour regarding its location is seen as a matter of some urgency.*
- *Once the Tourist Information Centre is operational, contact should be made to both Tourism Eyre Peninsula and SA Tourism Commission for formal accreditation & possible operational support*
- *Rural Transaction Centre funding – refer subsequent recommendation.*
- *Already there exists a healthy local retail trade in fresh oysters and finfish. There is no doubt that properly promoted, this market could significantly expand, creating a unique tourist attraction in the process. This outlet could be established by cooperative or by tender.*

RECOMMENDATION 10

That expressions of interest be sought for an operator to **establish and operate scheduled boat cruises of Franklin Harbour**, featuring the harbour, oyster/fin fish farms, mangrove creeks and fishing excursions.

“How to” hints

- *Initial contact be made with Tourism Eyre Peninsula’s Product Development Officer Shaun de Bruyn to broker arrangements with the South Australian Tourism Commission.*
- *Key contact at SA Tourism Commission – Mark Gill (Manager, Business Development)*
- *The author of this consultancy recently completed a feasibility study for Baird Bay Boat Charters & Ocean Eco Tours. The research material relating to Eyre Peninsula visitor trends, industry intelligence, marketing and promotion etc. would be made available on request.*
- *Note - one prominent Cowell oyster grower has already registered interest in operating launch cruises of Franklin Harbour, featuring fishing, aquaculture and marine wilderness areas.*

RECOMMENDATION 11

That the scenic drive south of town be developed and promoted as the **Coastal Ketches Tourist Drive**, featuring the early maritime history of the early schooners, coastal ketches and gulf steamers that played a such a fundamental part in the early development of Cowell and Franklin Harbour. That

Franklin Harbour and Districts into the Year 2020 – Building A Vision Splendid tourist drive to feature directional and interpretative signage, together with some basic visitor facilities – at strategic locations.

“How to” hints:

- *It is recommended that the beautiful beaches and coves that punctuate this coastal drive be named after some of the early coastal vessels that serviced the area, with interpretative signage explaining the history and significance to the visitor. Eg. - Post Boy, Fleetwing, Spindrift, Storm Bird, Kangaroo and Quorna.*
- *To maintain visitor interest, it is suggested that a secondary road be constructed at the northern end of the drive into the bottom sector of Franklin Harbour. This detour should also be signposted with the story of aquaculture together with information on the local wildlife.*
- *This attractive coastal detour can be completed with a loop back onto the Lincoln Highway south of Cowell makes it an attractive touring option for the visitor. The fact that it commences at the bottom end of the main street is an added benefit, drawing tourists into the central business area.*
- *This project may be eligible for subsidy funding under the Tourist Road Grant Scheme operated by the South Australian Tourism Commission.*
- *It is recommended that an inexpensive but informative brochure/map be produced, distributed by the Tourist Information Centre, Roadhouse and other local tourist outlets.*

RECOMMENDATION 12

Much has achieved by District Council and local traders in transforming the bottom end of **Main Street** into one of the most attractive commercial areas on Eyre Peninsula. It is recommended that this precinct be further developed as a tourist feature, including **interpretative plaques** on buildings of historic significance, more **craft outlets** and **heritage walking tours**.

“How to” hints:

- *Students at Cowell Area School have already completed some research towards the production of a Cowell Heritage Walking Tour brochure.*
- *Cowell art and craft fraternity should make contact with Country Arts SA about their “Creative Communities” program.*
- *A healthy tourist industry can be built on arts, crafts and shopping alone. Hahndorf and Burra would be two such examples.*

RECOMMENDATION 13

First impressions are critical. It is recommended that an appropriate level of ambience and amenities be created for the highway traveller on the **northern and southern gateways to Cowell**.

“How to” notes

- *It is important that a thematic approach to town approaches be adopted that both reflects and reinforces those things that make Cowell special.*

Franklin Harbour and Districts into the Year 2020 – Building A Vision Splendid
It is recommended that innovative treatment of Cowell jade and/or aquaculture be adopted as the focal point for the northern approach.

It has been suggested that an “Avenue of History” be established along Lincoln Highway leading into town from the south.

A boulevard of fast growing Australian native trees could be badged with the names of the early settlers, pioneering farming families, Cowell champions and those who made the ultimate sacrifice in times of war.

- *A welcoming atmosphere, easy access to parking, shady trees, clean toilets, informative signage and good tucker are essential elements in any strategy to slow down & stop the highway traveller.*
- *As part of the town entrance strategy, motivational tourist signage will play a significant role in encouraging the visitor firstly to stop and secondly to explore and spend in your town*

In summary, a town improvement initiative designed to attract the highway traveller should address the following fundamentals;

- *Development of logo and slogan*
- *Improved directional and motivational signage*
- *Landscaping and beautification of highway approaches*
- *Inviting facilities and amenities for the highway traveller (toilets, shade, parking, picnic areas, access to drinking water, internet access etc.)*
- *Information bay and centre*
- *Visual traffic-stopper of local character. For example, a unique structure in jade.*

RECOMMENDATION 14

It is recommended that Cowell/Franklin Harbour should position itself as the **Spencer Gulf Gateway to Eyre Peninsula**, maximising marketing opportunities arising from its strategic highway location as a natural north-eastern entrance to the Peninsula. The following product development would need to be addressed (across the district of Franklin Harbour):

- Access roads
- Directional/motivational tourist signposting
- Highway signage
- Visitor facilities and amenities

RECOMMENDATION 15

That a **Cowell & Districts Tourism Association** be formed, with priority given to **upgrading its local tourist promotional hardware**, namely:

- Review of its full colour motivational/informational visitor brochure for local distribution, regional tourist information centres and outlets, strategic highway locations, SATC, RAA and Tourism Eyre Peninsula tourist promotions.
- Establish a library of high quality photographic images (colour print and transparencies) and broadcast quality video footage of Cowell and district.
- Production of a standard media kit, containing press releases/tourist brochures
- Encourage local business houses with an interface with the visitor to display block mounted photographic images of key tourist attractions of the district of Franklin Harbour.
- Implementation of a program of targeted media/industry familiarisations
- Operator funded display advertisement in Eyre Peninsula Secrets Regional Tourist Guide
- Editorial upgrade of Cowell editorial in the same publication
- Review of Cowell's logo and slogan

Tourism is just another business whose client base generally comes from outside of the district. Rather than to add to the proliferation of meeting commitments of busy people, consideration should be given to the formation of a joint **Cowell Business & Tourism Association**.

RECOMMENDATION 16

That a **major festival or event** (annual or bi-annual) be staged, incorporating the jade, seafood and or fishing as a focal point for both event organisation and marketing purposes. The event should be structured to have both community and visitor appeal, and the central theme limited only by the imagination.

It is further recommended that early contact be made with the Festival and Events section of South Australian Tourism Commission and Country Arts SA for advice, support and possible funding assistance.

RECOMMENDATION 17

It is recommended that the newly formed **Cowell Districts Tourism Association** should progressively address the following initiatives raised as part of the Cowell Community Survey process:

- Guided tours of the jade mining areas
- Feasibility study into the establishment of a backpacker hostel
- One-stop shop for fresh and cooked oysters
- Drive-yourself history tours of Cowell & districts (with brochure/map)
- Sheep industry tours for the tourist, including shearing demonstrations
- Annual fishing competitions with regular weigh-ins and major prizes
- Upgrade visitor access to northern and southern end of Franklin Harbour
- Establishment of Visitor Information Bay on Lincoln Highway
- Festival and Special Events
- Investigation of tourism potential of Wind Power Farms
- Ridge top tourist trails, including Middlecamp
- Upgrade visitor infrastructure (roads, toilets, signposting, toilets, picnic areas etc.)

BUSINESS & INDUSTRY

RECOMMENDATION 18

It is recommended that the business community of Cowell support the tourist sector in an aggressive **town improvement program** to foster a higher level of local business expenditure as well as enhanced visitor activity from extended stay holidaymakers and Lincoln Highway traffic.

“How to” hints:

- *In a cooperative initiative between the District Council of Franklin Harbour and Cowell traders, the central business district has recently been transformed into a commercial precinct of considerable charm and ambience. Paved footpaths and nature strips, underground power, ornamental posts etc., against a backdrop of historic buildings freshly painted in heritage colours. Cowell could now lay claim to having one of the most attractive main streets of any town on Eyre Peninsula, with significant potential for further development.*
- *It is strongly recommended that this heritage theme be further developed, with consideration being given to the following:*
 - Plaques on heritage/significant buildings (Main Street Historic Walking Tour/Brochure)*
 - Heritage themes in shop windows*
 - Incentives to foster establishment of art and craft outlets*
 - Encouragement of local food outlets to feature local seafood*
 - Review of access and facilities for the disabled*
 - Provision of clean toilets, including facilities for infants*
 - Regular maintenance program for vacant premises*

RECOMMENDATION 19

As part of the above town improvement initiative, it is recommended that a standardisation, consolidation and **upgrading of commercial business signage** on the highway approaches to town be undertaken. That signage to include white on blue service signs adjacent to the Lincoln Highway/Main Street T-junction, specifying all major retailing services on offer in Cowell CBD

“How to” hints:

Commercial highway display erected on the outskirts of Wudinna township is an excellent example of how to get the key messages across to the highway traveller without an ugly proliferation of signs

RECOMMENDATION 20

It is recommended that an aggressive **Shop Locally campaign** be jointly undertaken by Cowell businesses, to staunch the flow of dollars out of the local economy.

“How to” hints:

- *The central thrust of the Shop Locally campaign should be designed to lift the level of awareness about the critical importance about maintaining a healthy and robust local business economy*
- *That campaign could be as simple as a computer-generated A4 poster in every business premise window in Cowell, promoting the benefits of shopping locally*

The central theme should promote a simple message along the lines of “Every dollar spent in Cowell is a dollar invested in Franklin Harbour’s future” or similar.

RECOMMENDATION 21

In tandem with the Shop Locally campaign, it is suggested that Cowell traders undertake a program designed to offer their clientele the very best in **service and hospitality**

“How to” hints:

- *It is conceded that a small country town will always struggle to compete with their regional centre and capital city counterparts in fields of product range and price*
- *However, there is no reason why the small country business cannot match/surpass their competitors in areas of friendly service, quality merchandise and creative presentation of product*
- *Local business incentives – Employer of the year/Best customer service etc.*

Marketing push with catchy slogan – “Cowell Cares”, “Classic Cowell”, “Franklin Harbour – Frankly Fabulous” or similar

- *The Town Ambassador Program has been developed to improve the customer service skills of the frontline people in small businesses in regional South Australia. It also creates awareness and ownership of the tourism product to the local business community enabling them to articulate this local knowledge to visitors with confidence. Further details - Spencer Institute of TAFE.*

RECOMMENDATION 22

It is recommended that Cowell traders, either collectively or individually, take advantage of the resources available for **business advice and support**, through the Eyre Regional Development Board, The Business Centre and the Office of Employment & Youth.

“How to” notes:

First point of contact:

- *Business advice and assistance* Luke Thomas, Business Adviser, ERDB
- *Employment programs* Peter Mitchell, Industry & Employment, ERDB

RECOMMENDATION 23

It is recommended that investigation into the development of a **Cowell/Franklin Harbour web site** should be initiated. That web site should contain links to local government, business, service and tourism sectors.

“How to” hints:

Edited sections of this report (general town information, industry and commerce, history, statistics, etc. could be used as a starting point

*Free technical advice, support and assistance can be obtained by making contact with:
Mark Thomas, IT Project Officer at the Eyre Regional Development Board in Port Lincoln*

RECOMMENDATION 24

That preliminary negotiations be entered into with the regional office of PIRSA and the Eyre Regional Development Board, to explore the potential of **alternative (and sustainable) industries** in the fields for agriculture, horticulture and aquaculture in the district of Franklin Harbour

RECOMMENDATION 25

Similarly, that investigation into **adding value to primary production** of grain, wool and minerals should be carried out, to further facilitate diversification of Cowell and District's economic base and employment opportunities.

RECOMMENDATION 26

It is strongly recommended that Franklin Harbour **oyster growers and fin fish farmers** explore the significant growth potential in the area of **product packaging and value adding**.

"How to" notes:

There is little likelihood of additional waters being approved for oyster growing in Franklin Harbour, therefore there will be limited capacity for increased primary production on existing leases.

Key issues to be explored:

- *Secondary processing and product packaging*
- *Appropriate planning and development issues to foster a sustainable industry, including zoning for land based infrastructure*
- *Diversification of species*

- *Sourcing development funding*
- *Innovative marketing and promotion, including generic branding (Fresh as Eyre)*
- *Local product sales to the visitor*
- *Interface with the tourist industry – boat cruises, aquaculture interpretative centre etc*

RECOMMENDATION 27

That local farmers should give consideration to forming **Self-Help Action Groups** to access training and technical advice, enhance business skills and explore sustainable farming technologies.

RECOMMENDATION 28

The formation of a **Cowell Traders and Tourist Association** to address strategic opportunities and impediments facing the retail, service and tourism sectors is strongly recommended.

"How to" hints:

- *In addition to the recommendations recorded above, there were a number of issues raised in the Community Survey that could be addressed by a local business group.*

- *A number of responses recorded goods, services and skills currently not available in Cowell, namely:*

Retail/Service sector

Manchester

Footwear

Fresh food

Clothing

Car cleaning service (Opportunity for youth)

Other

Industrial Estate

Central Freight Depot

- *It stands to reason that if a local resident is travelling out of town to purchase a particular product, their shopping list will not be restricted to that one missing item.*

Strength through Unity – Traders and Tourism Committee recommended

- ***The Multiplier Effect of Tourism***

The Bureau of Industry Economics has determined that for every primary tourist dollar expended, a final income of \$2.62 is generated in the local economy.

This multiplier effect is particularly high for the tourist industry because of the propensity of the visitor to consume local goods and services.

- **Major Beneficiaries of Tourism Expenditure**

For every visitor dollar spent, 44 cents finishes up in the coffers of primary tourist operations such as motels, caravan parks, holiday flats, transport, tours, cruises & the like.

Surprisingly, the remaining 56 cents (or more than half) finishes up in the cash registers of ordinary businesses like service stations, supermarkets, newsagents, takeaways, bottle shops, chemists, bakeries, gift shops, clothing/footwear and other retail & service sectors.

- **Local Tourism and its role in attracting Foreign Capital**

Attract 25 carloads of new tourists every night of the year, and you have built an industry equivalent to a factory with an annual payroll of \$1.9 million and 25 full time permanent jobs.

HEALTH, EDUCATION & COMMUNITY SERVICES

RECOMMENDATION 29

The pivotal role undertaken by both the **Cowell Area School** and **Cowell District Hospital** in the development, health and welfare of the local community should not be undervalued. It is strongly recommended that the Franklin Harbour Community Development Group **maintain strong and proactive links with both organisations**, particularly in the maintenance of adequate staffing and financial resources.

RECOMMENDATION 30

It is further recommended that informal negotiations occur with the management of Cowell Hospital to ascertain the level of support and assistance required to facilitate future development plans in areas of **aged & disabled care, visiting specialists & therapists, nurse training etc.**

RECOMMENDATION 31

Similarly, it is recommended that the Franklin Harbour Community Development Group maintain a close operational relationship with **Cowell Area School**, to assist that organisation maintain a high level of performance, particularly their capacity to offer **a broad range of subjects, attracting quality teaching/support staff and retaining student population numbers.**

RECOMMENDATION 32

As a logical extension to the findings of this Franklin Harbour Community Development Plan, it is recommended that formal application be made to **University of South Australia (Whyalla Campus)**, to undertake **additional research on economic and community development in remote rural towns** of populations of less than one thousand.

RECOMMENDATION 33

It is recommended that a feasibility study be undertaken to ascertain whether financial assistance is available under the Rural Transactions Program to establish a **Rural Transaction Centre**, providing basic services such as banking, post, telephone, facsimile and medicare.

“How to” notes:

- **Program of Commonwealth Department of Transport & Regional Services**

- Grants of up \$250,000 possible, with significant funds currently available for approved projects
- RTCs are designed to provide community access to services such as:
 - Financial Services
 - Post, Phone, Fax & Internet
 - Medicare Easyclaim
 - Centrelink
 - Facilities for visiting professionals
 - Printing & Secretarial Services
 - Tourism Information*
- Transaction Centres can be operated as a multi-purpose facility, including tourist information*
- Centres must be run as a non-profit operation, and must not compete with local businesses
- Eleanor Scholz of Wudinna is RTC Regional Field Officer and also on National Secretariat.
Contact details: Phone/Fax 8680 2969 Mobile 0410 531 666 Email eleanors@grm.com.au

RECOMMENDATION 34

In order to break down barriers of distance and reduce meeting costs, it is recommended that the Franklin Harbour Community Development Group make application for funding to subsidise the provision of **Video Conferencing Facilities** for both community and commercial application.

“How to” notes:

Application for financing Video Conferencing Facilities for the District Council of Franklin Harbour have now been submitted to Networking the Nation by Eyre Regional Development Board and endorsed by Eyre Peninsula Local Government Association

Outcome to submission – promising

Likely site – District Council of Franklin Harbour

RECOMMENDATION 35

The Community Survey identified a real need for further education ranging from small business skills to sheep shearing. It is recommended that the Franklin Harbour Community Development Group set up a formal meeting with the **Spencer Institute of TAFE** to discuss future strategies relevant to the **range, frequency and content of courses** to be made available to the community of Franklin Harbour in the future.

RECOMMENDATION 36

Franklin Harbour district is rich in informal art and crafts activity. It is recommended that **Country Arts SA** be invited to explore opportunities **to further develop/commercialise art and craft skills** within the Franklin Harbour community.

“How to” hints:

Name of program – “Creative Communities”

Contact:

Alexandra Reid,

Arts Development Manager(Western),

Country Arts SA,

PO Box 580, CEDUNA, SA, 5690.

Vance Thomas & Associates

Marketing and Developing Regional Australia

INFRASTRUCTURE

RECOMMENDATION 37

It is recommended that the Franklin Harbour Community Development Group liaise closely with the District Council of Franklin Harbour, ERDB and EPLGA in the **setting of priorities, lobbying and sourcing of grant funding to facilitate a strategic upgrading of the local road network.**

“How to” hints:

- *Franklin Harbour has an extensive local road network of 940 kilometres, of which 97% are unsealed. This road network services a broad tract of land covering an area of 3,283 sq. km. In rough terms, there is one rateable property to each and every kilometre of road in the district.*
- *Special Local Roads Program (15% of Identified Local Roads component of Commonwealth Financial Assistance Grants FAGs) \$3.4 million distributed to local government annually. The Cowell to Kimba road is next on the list of regional priorities for SLRP funding.*
- *The State Government funded Regional Roads Program (\$2.2 million in 2001/2) distributed according to criteria and principles established by the Minister of Transport.*
- *Subject to funding, an Eyre Peninsula Regional Road Strategy will be undertaken during 2002. The project is designed to independently position our regional road priorities, in addition to clearly establishing future directions based on economic, community, industry, tourism & safety parameters.*

*Contact person is Vance Thomas, Executive Officer for Eyre Peninsula Local Govt. Association
Telephone 8682 6588 Facsimile 8682 5081 E-mail vance@erdb.org.au*

RECOMMENDATION 38

Similarly, it is recommended that the Community Development Group maintain close communication links with Council, the regional organisations for local government/economic development and the Eyre Peninsula Catchment Water Management Board to **ensure an adequate and affordable supply of power and water** for Franklin Harbour in the future.

“How to” notes:

- *Historically, the district of Franklin Harbour’s water supply was delivered by the Yedulknie Scheme, comprising three reservoirs at Yedulknie, Ullabidinie and Ulbana. Several respondents to the Community Survey suggested that a feasibility study should be undertaken to ascertain whether these catchment dams could be returned to service to ensure reliable supplies in the future.*
- *The primary source of Franklin Harbour’s supply is from the southern underground water basins located on lower Eyre Peninsula.*
- *Future water supplies for Eyre Peninsula in general (and Franklin Harbour as a direct result) are under significant pressure in the short to medium term.*
- *In a more proactive sense, the Eyre Regional Development Board and the Eyre Peninsula Local Government Association are currently investigating opportunities to supplement the region’s fragile water supply, that do not place additional pressures on the underground basins/Tod River systems.*
- *An **Eyre Peninsula Water Summit** has been programmed for Wudinna on **Friday 22 March 2002** to address these important issues, and it is recommended that the Franklin Harbour Community Development Group be represented.*
- *In the medium to longer term, both the district of Franklin Harbour and the region of Eyre Peninsula has a question mark over the supply and certainty of future electricity needs, exacerbated by the privatisation of ETSA and the State’s entry into the national market.*
- *Eyre Peninsula (and Franklin Harbour) is in an extremely vulnerable position with regard to its regional power supply, being totally dependent on a single ageing transmission line from Whyalla to Port Lincoln.*
- *In recent years, Cowell and districts has witnessed an increasing frequency of major power outages, particularly during summer months when the State system is under heavy load.*
- *The Eyre Peninsula Local Government Association recently secured a grant to undertake a statewide project on the **reliability, supply, pricing and infrastructure of power to regional South Australia**. That initiative will commence in the latter part of 2002.*
- *Contact person for further developments on the “Power to the People of Regional SA” strategy is:*

Vance Thomas
Executive Officer
Eyre Peninsula Local Government Association
PO Box 2010
PORT LINCOLN SA 5606
Telephone 8682 6588 Facsimile 8682 5081 E-mail vance@erdb.org.au

RECOMMENDATION 39

It is recommended that **the future needs for residential and commercial real estate** (including commercial/industrial needs, residential versus commercial zoning, new residential housing, affordable rental accommodation and housing for the mature aged sector) be investigated.

“How to” hints:

In the period 1991 to 1996, Cowell witnessed 7.6% growth in the township’s population and a 7.2% increase in the number of town dwellings.

Healthy growth in building approvals and property sales over the 3-year period from 1997 to 1999.

The number of people in the district of Franklin Harbour aged 65 years and over increased from 195 to 237 (21.5%) during the decade of the nineties.

Cowell is well positioned to capitalise on growth that can be predicted from aquaculture, tourism, wind power, local senior citizens and retirees/superannuants from out of the town.

RECOMMENDATION 40

The Eyre Regional Development Board identifies wind power generation as one of the region’s rapid growth industries of the current decade. Therefore it is recommended that the Franklin Harbour Community Development Group give consideration to **providing a letter of support to the wind power proposal at Yabmana.**

“How to” notes:

- *The proponent is the Adelaide based wind energy developer, Wind Prospect. Their contact details are as follows:*

*Michael Vawser
General Manager
Wind Prospect Pty. Ltd.
178 Main Road
MCLAREN VALE SA 5171
Telephone: 8323 9322 E-mail: info@windprospect.com.au*

- *This wind power project has significant economic potential for the Franklin Harbour district in its own right. However, the proposal also has the capacity to generate significant interest for the tourist, thereby adding one more attraction on the visitor’s list of things to see and do, as well as opening up the Cowell hill country as an optional tourist area.*

RECOMMENDATION 41

A cross-ferry link between Cowell and Wallaroo has been on the developer’s drawing boards since the mid-nineties. Subject to appropriate frequency, speed, fare structure, infrastructure and local planning controls, a cross-gulf transport service could have a positive impact on the future economic and community development of the district of Franklin Harbour. Therefore, it is recommended that the Franklin Harbour Community Development Group maintain close links with the District Council of Franklin Harbour, the Eyre Regional Development Board and the project proponents, to facilitate community input on any such proposal.

SPORT & RECREATION

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

Maintenance of an adequate program of sporting and recreational activity is one of the principal ingredients in the mix that makes up a recipe for a happy healthy rural community.

The task of providing an appropriate level of sport and recreation across regional South Australia becomes directly more difficult with size and remoteness, and inversely more difficult with population.

The Eyre Peninsula Local Government Association recently secured funding from the Office for Recreation & Sport and Planning SA to undertake the Eyre Peninsula Sport, Recreation and Open Space Strategy. Consultant Phillip Gray of Phillip Gray and Associates was engaged to undertake this consultancy, the Final Report due early in 2002.

In their interim report, Phillip Gray & Associates identified Eyre Peninsula as have the following constraints with regard to the provision of recreational & sporting activity to the region's community:

- Connecting isolated communities to services and facilities
- Limited budgets at the community level due to low population base
- Diminishing numbers of young people participating in sport and recreation
- Maintenance and rationalisation of infrastructure
- Difficulty in recruiting voluntary committee, particularly in the field of financial management

The report also summarises the basic standard of recreation and sports facilities that should be available to Eyre Peninsula residents. These standards are not intended to be mandatory, but more a benchmark against which current provision can be assessed.

Cowell was assessed as a District Centre with the following basic standard of provision:

Playing field	Full size, irrigated football oval, with concrete wicket suitable for competition matches.
Hard Court	At least four floodlit courts, marked for both tennis and netball.
Sports Hall	At least 33m x 17m, suitable for netball and other court sports.

RECOMMENDATION 42

It recommended that the Franklin Harbour Community Development Group review the findings and recommendations of the final report of the **Eyre Peninsula Sport, Recreation and Open Space Strategy**, due to be released in March/April 2002

"How to" notes:

A copy of the report can be obtained by contacting:

*Vance Thomas, Executive Officer
Eyre Peninsula Local Government Association
PO Box 2010, PORT LINCOLN SA 5606*

RECOMMENDATION 43

As a result of its relatively neutral position within the local community, it is recommended that the Franklin Harbour Community Group **facilitate a meeting of the district's sporting and recreational bodies** to investigate opportunities for improved integration/rationalisation of **volunteer resources, venues, social facilities, funding, sponsorship and infrastructure**

RECOMMENDATION 44

It is further recommended that a feasibility study be undertaken to ascertain the capacity of the Franklin Harbour community to finance and maintain the following sporting/recreational facilities:

- **Multi-purpose indoor sporting complex** to accommodate netball, volleyball, indoor cricket, basketball, wall-climbing, aerobics and a gymnasium. Use by school, sports community and general public. Also fitness and health programs for the mature aged.
- Upgrade or replace purpose-built **Swimming Pool** facility to service school, learn to swim, general community & social use, sporting bodies, rehabilitation and mature aged.

"How to" hints:

Office for Recreation and Sport has a special fund set aside for the development of new and existing recreational/sporting facilities at the regional level that meet at least one of the following criteria:

- *The facility is or will be a focal point for activities that fulfil a significant regional need*
- *The facility is or will not only be used by people in the town in which it is located, but will also service the broader regional community*
- *Improve the communities access to quality recreation and sports facilities of regional significance*

Maximum grants of up to \$150000 per project, provided applicant could demonstrate capacity to contribute at least 50% of the total cost. Smaller projects will be considered provided it can be demonstrated that they are of sufficient strategic and regional significance

This program is operated annually, with applications generally lodged by the last Friday in March

RECOMMENDATION 45

Finally, it is recommended that Franklin Harbour Community Development Group review over time, some of the ideas recorded as part of the **Community Survey** in the field of recreation and sport, namely:

- Encourage inter-sporting club visits from other parts of Eyre Peninsula
- Revival of old swimming pool located between the two jetties, with inclusion of protective netting.
- Establish a short stretch of sandy beach on foreshore for enjoyment of locals and visitors alike.
- A jogger's group for healthy recreation & social group activity.
- A motor bike/dirt & road bike track to promote organised activity and promote to other clubs on Eyre Peninsula.
- A bike trail along the foreshore
- Erection of a shaded area (large sail) over playground at Lion's Picnic Park.

ENVIRONMENT

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

Natural resource management is an essential ingredient of any worthwhile recipe for community or economic development.

If it is not environmentally sustainable in the longer term, either move on to something else or re-design the project to integrate better with the local environment.

“Sustainable” is no longer a greenie buzzword, but an integral component of any industry with a close interface with our natural resources, whether it be agriculture, mining, tourism, fishing or aquaculture.

Integrated natural resource management also recognises the inherent linkages between various ecological components – soil, water, fauna, vegetation etc. on land as well as in coastal and marine environments.

In the Year 2000/1, the Eyre Peninsula region received \$4.2 million in natural resource subsidies, primarily from the Natural Heritage Trust and Coast & Clean Seas/Coastcare programs.

In 1999, the Eyre Peninsula community, in line with environmental policy directions of both State and Federal Governments, formed an interim regional natural resource management group.

Last year the Eyre Peninsula Natural Resource Management Group successfully sourced funding through the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) program to develop an Integrated Natural Resource Management Plan for Eyre Peninsula.

The plan will address the following:

- NRM on Eyre Peninsula – The Current Situation
- Key Issues in Natural Resource Management
- Future Directions for NRM on Eyre Peninsula
- Reference Information and Supporting Data

This project is currently in its final draft planning/consultation stage.

RECOMMENDATION 46

The Eyre Peninsula Natural Resource Management Group is a major regional player in the field of natural resource management. It is suggested that the Franklin Harbour Community Development Group establish formal relations with this group. It is further recommended that a copy of the final **Eyre Peninsula Natural Resource Management Plan** be obtained, and the document reviewed to identify opportunities for natural resource management across the district of Franklin Harbour.

“How to” hints:

Contact details for EPNRM:

Anita Crisp

Executive Officer

Eyre Peninsula Natural Resource Management Group

PO Box 60

WUDINNA SA 5652

Telephone/Facsimile: 8680 2653 E-mail: epnrm@ozemail.com.au

RECOMMENDATION 47

It is recommended that **funding opportunities for natural resource initiatives for Franklin Harbour** be further explored, with particular reference to the major funding programs available through **Natural Heritage Trust Mark 2** and **Coast and Clean Seas**.

“How to” hints:

Contact details for the further advice and information on the above-mentioned programs:

*Ben Hyde, Regional NHT Coordinator
PIRSA*

Fourth Street, CLEVE. SA. 5640.

Telephone: 8628 2091

Facsimile: 8628 2512

E-mail: Hyde.Ben@saugov.sa.gov.au

Don Maddern, Manager

Coastcare

25 West Terrace, TUMBY BAY. SA. 5605.

Telephone: 8688 2655

RECOMMENDATION 48

It is recommended that the Franklin Harbour Community Development Group in tandem with Council and relevant community groups investigate the **implementation of a staged town beautification plan for Cowell and district**, with an ultimate objective of making it Eyre Peninsula's premier district to live or to visit.

RECOMMENDATION 49

Finally, it is recommended that Franklin Harbour Community Development Group review over time, some of the ideas and natural resource issues recorded as part of the **Community Survey**, namely:

- Undertake a study in effluent control to determine **whether harbour waters and mangrove areas** are affected by **town effluent and stormwater**.
- A project to **revitalise the district's two reservoirs** – boost local water supply and provide picturesque picnic facility for local and visitor alike.
- Investigation of the potential of developing large vacant plot of land on the corner of the Whyalla to Port Lincoln Highway. **Picnic area with toilet facility for the highway traveller.**
- Increase areas dedicated to natural park areas, including a **clean-up of vacant allotments** around the town. (Area in vicinity of the Aged Cottages and Bowling Club.)
- **Bitumen access road to the jetty**, constructing a turnaround-area at the interface with the timber structure.
- Utilisation of **town effluent and street run-off** to create wood lots, green precincts and irrigation of recreational/sporting facilities.
- **Roadside revegetation, tree planting, boxthorn removal and remediation** of tract of land stretching from Hospital to foreshore. Utilisation of **run-off to water parks, ovals golf course.**

YOUTH AFFAIRS

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

Last maybe, but your young people are certainly not least in the role they will play in determining future directions and fortunes of the district of Franklin Harbour in the years ahead.

In fact the social and economic fabric of your community will ultimately depend on maintaining a robust and progressive population of youth.

Young people are essential to the future of regional South Australia, therefore their unique needs must be met if they are to be retained in (or attracted to) our rural communities.

One of the great paradoxes facing small country towns is that the majority of rural youth want to settle in or close to the town of their birth.

If the greatest threat to rural communities is loss of population, the greatest challenge must be job creation for its youth.

Ultimately, survival of small country towns will depend on their capacity to develop mechanisms and strategies that address the special needs of youth.

If we can do so, we tap into a huge reservoir of energy, ideas and creativity.

RECOMMENDATION 50

It is recommended that funding is sourced to employ and accommodate a **Project Officer** on a full or part time basis; the role of that person to work with the **youth of Franklin Harbour**, in areas of job opportunities, education & training needs, sporting, recreational and entertainment facilities.

RECOMMENDATION 51

As a mechanism to help bridge the “generation gap”, it is recommended that an informal **Youth Forum** be convened to **address key youth issues and aspirations**, including the following:

- Youth Needs Analysis
- Job Opportunities
- Training Needs
- Affordable Accommodation
- Sport and Recreation
- Information Technology Requirements
- Entertainment
- Community Involvement
- Better Communication Links

In order to tap into that huge reservoir of energy, vitality and enthusiasm of local youth, it is recommended that a **Youth Mentoring Program** be established, to enable more of Franklin Harbour's young people to take a leadership role in the district's community organisations, sport clubs and industry associations.

RECOMMENDATION 53

It is recommended that an investigation into the feasibility of **converting one of the unused buildings in Main Street** into a **drop-in centre/activities hub** for Franklin Harbour's youth should be explored.

RECOMMENDATION 54

It is recommended that that encouragement be given to **local government** and **key regional organisations** to have a **specific focus on youth development** as part of their traditional planning processes.

RECOMMENDATION 55

Finally, it is recommended that Franklin Harbour Community Development Group review over time, some of the youth issues recorded as part of the **Community Survey**, namely:

- Indoor sports and fitness facilities for young people
- Upgrade salt water swimming areas
- Urgent need to develop more activities and entertainment for the youth of the district
- Organised entertainment on a Saturday night once a month
- Non-electronic activities centre for Franklin Harbour youth
- Youth centre with financial and community support. Permanent base with activities organised at least twice monthly
- Establish a motor cycle track for the district's youth
- Convert one of the old unused buildings in the main street as a meeting place for young teenagers
- Activity centre for our youth – coffee, snacks, music, 8-ball, play stations, internet, gym etc.
- Develop more things to do for local young people. Skate parks, BMX etc.
- Establishment a youth group whose charter it is to focus on youth activities, events and entertainment

7. A Final Comment

Over the past 6 months, I have learnt a great deal about the district of Franklin Harbour and its people.

Born in the Wimmera wheat-growing belt of NE Victoria, I spent my early childhood growing up in a town not unlike Cowell. Therefore it comes as no great surprise that the commitment to this job and the feeling of affinity for the district and its people goes beyond the boundaries of this consultancy.

Childhood pursuits have been lost in the mists of a much simpler time, but my underlying memories were those of community, safety and a real sense of belonging – these are the things that country towns do best.

If I am not mistaken, it is one of the underlying reasons driving this small town revitalisation initiative.

So what has put all this pressure on our small country towns?

At the macro level, flash Harry terms like; economic rationalism, the Hilmer Report, competitive pricing policies, downsizing of government agencies, centralisation, deregulation etc. may make good sense for the global economic picture. But more often than not, they spell real trouble for the critical mass of small country precincts like Franklin Harbour.

I am yet to be convinced they all make a whole lot of sense in the economic big picture. At the local level, things like:

- Increased mobility
- More sophisticated information technology – a two-edged sword
- Market forces/deregulation –the changing dynamics of the broad acre farmer and fisher
- Isolation/perceived lack of facilities/amenities/opportunities
- Difficulties in attracting and retaining the professionals (health, education, trades etc)
- Vagaries of wind, water and world commodity prices.
- Changing consumer patterns
- Leakage of dollars out of the local economy
- Negative imagery and perceptions
- Population drift
- Most tragic of all, loss of your best assets, the foundation of Franklin Harbour's future - your kids:
 - ~ Can't find a place on the family farm.
 - ~ Not enough stimulating job opportunities at the local level.
 - ~ Lure of the big city lights.
 - ~ Going on to complete tertiary education (rarely to return).

As people leave the district with their families, the economic multiplier is considerable.

You do not need huge budgets and an army of experts to mount a successful small town revitalisation campaign.

So what are the key ingredients for a recipe for success:

- You need a bit of vision
- You need commitment
- You need the capacity to embrace change

- You need a healthy dollop of innovation and creativity
- You need local leadership.
- You need a team of good workers.
- You need to aim with a rifle not blast away with a shotgun.
- You need to set realistic objectives and achievable goals.
- You need to take stock of what you can change and what you cannot.

- You need to build bridges with like groups/similar goals. Don't operate in a vacuum.
- You need operating capital, not all of which has to come out of your own pockets.
- You need a few good results early.
- You need to master the media merry-go-round
- Above all, you need a bit of bush cunning and rural resolve to see the job through.

So the mission is a relatively simple one:

To come up with an innovative and achievable blueprint, designed to consolidate and grow the services, facilities, business and population of Franklin Harbour & districts.

Its implementation will take dedication, commitment and lots of hard work.

A campaign designed to consolidate Franklin Harbour's future growth and prosperity needs to walk away from the tired and unsuccessful methods of the past, and focus on a long-term vision of innovation and enterprise, backed by a close-knit and supportive community.

It can be done! In fact, some significant goals have already been kicked.

At the very first meeting with the newly structured Franklin Harbour Community Development Group it was evident that Cowell and district had a brightly glowing ember. That ember could be fanned to ignite a community into reversing the gradual erosion of their district's fortunes - commercial, community and recreational.

The raw ingredients are all there.

However, one of the challenges of sustaining a small town revival campaign is "maintaining the rage".

A word of caution!

The greatest threat to the Franklin Harbour Working Town's initiative achieving its ultimate goals is likely to be burnout of the key players. Without exception, it is busy and dedicated people who provide the driving force behind organisations such as the Franklin Harbour Community Development Group.

The early days of this campaign will be driven along by its own wave of excitement, novelty and activity. Invariably, the lion's share of the workload falls back on a dedicated few. People with families, people with businesses to run and people with recreational and sporting pursuits.

It is absolutely critical that a mechanism be put into place at some early stage of the campaign to enable some degree of delegation, load sharing and succession planning.

Implementation of the fifty plus recommendations contained within this draft report will demand a significant investment in time, money and commitment. Several of the projects could be put into place over a relatively short time frame, but many may not come to fruition for several years.

I wish the Franklin Harbour Community Development Group every success in the exciting challenge ahead.

VANCE THOMAS
Vance Thomas & Associates
January 2002

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