



# 2.0 Project Context

## 2.1 Regional Challenges and Opportunities

The Isaac Region, situated within the Bowen Basin and encompassing the regional townships of Dysart, Middlemount, Moranbah, Clermont, Nebo and Glenden, as well as a number of smaller communities inland and along the Isaac Coast, is currently experiencing significant region-wide population growth.

While the permanent population across the region has steadily increased by just under 2% per year since 2006, the increase in mining operations<sup>1</sup>, and the industry preference for Fly-in/Fly-out (FIFO) or Drive-in/Drive-out (DIDO) employment arrangements is driving a marked increase in the transient workforce accommodated in the region, to the extent that the population of the transient workforce is set to exceed the permanent population in each town by mid 2012. In Dysart's case, this will translate to a permanent population of approximately 3400, and an anticipated transient workforce of approximately 3800 persons.

This presents the Isaac Region with the challenging reality of providing services and infrastructure to a population that is essentially double the size, with 22,629 permanent residents (2010 figures) and a further 20,000 transient workers (with a further 9000 expected over the course of 2012).

This is currently putting a level of strain on services and infrastructure that wasn't anticipated until 30-40 years from now, based on steady growth of the permanent population.

As KPMG's recent study illustrates, the services most under pressure within each community are typically those which are required by both non-resident workers and the local community, such as roadways, health services and personnel, police, paramedic and fire services and personnel, accommodation and entertainment facilities such as cinemas.

Conversely, the prevalence of FIFO and DIDO employees, which reduces the potential population of family and youth in these towns also impacts on the quality and diversity of town services and facilities required either exclusively or predominantly by residents, such as schools, education facilities, kindergartens, open space, supermarkets, cafes/restaurants and cultural institutions such as churches, museums and galleries.

These findings are reinforced by the community consultation undertaken for the Dysart Urban Design Framework, with similar concerns identified by the Dysart community affecting the 'livability' of Dysart and the social health of the Community.

These issues form a powerful context to the development of the Dysart Urban Design Framework, which seeks to deliver the Dysart Community's vision for a sustainable and lively town.

Indeed, the findings of KPMG's study and the consultation undertaken for this project highlight the need for the urban structure of towns such as Dysart to be able to adapt to support the change the Isaac Region is facing over the next 20 years and beyond.

Local, Council and Industry investment in both places for people and people themselves, will give towns such as Dysart the best means of developing strong communities that can benefit and grow sustainably from the opportunities provided by mining in the Isaac Region.

<sup>1</sup>29 mines existing in 2011 and a further 6 planned to begin construction by 2012, representing a 21% increase in mining operations in the region

References:

*Redefining Regional Planning: Managing Change, Measuring Growth.* KPMG, 7 November 2011

*Donger residents put pressure on towns near mines*, Bernard Salt, The Australian, November 10, 2011

## 2.2 Current Projects in Dysart

At the time of preparing this report, a number of key projects were currently at an early planning stage, and highly likely to proceed to construction/implementation stage within the next 2 years.

While not yet realised, the influence of these projects has been considered in the UDF, to ensure that the town's structure and future development responds to these developments.

### **North-Western Residential Expansion**

A large area of privately owned land north-west of the town will be developed in stages, with a focus on providing larger rural-living allotments to the residential market.

### **Dysart Town Entrance Project**

BMA currently has plans to redevelop the main town entrance (at the junction of Dysart-Moranbah Road and Garnham Drive). The plans for this redevelopment have been assessed within this project, so that the Dysart UDF incorporates the ideas within this initiative.

### **Dysart Vehicular Rest Stop**

The Road Accident Action Group (RAAG) plans to deliver a new truck/vehicular rest area along the Dysart-Middlemount Road. The exact location of this facility has not yet been confirmed, however will be considered within the UDF alongside the entrance upgrade project.

### **Dysart Town Centre Residential and Commercial Development**

An approved application for the development of 74 new residential apartments within the Town Centre is currently in development, to be sited on the vacant land north and east of the Garden Plaza shopping centre.

The first stage of this development (including 24 apartments) is due to start construction in early 2012. A further 4 stages to this development envisages the delivery of further medium density residential apartments, mixed use residential (combining residential and commercial accommodation) as well as a substantial redevelopment and expansion of the Garden Plaza Shopping Centre, increasing the lettable commercial area from 3350m<sup>2</sup> to 6700m<sup>2</sup>.

The establishment of a central covered plaza space will greatly improve the amenity of this public space, enabling 'spill out' cafe seating, and a children's play area.

This development will be supported by additional car parking adjacent the new commercial and residential accommodation, as well as new entrance portal structures and covered pedestrian walkways, to improve the legibility and accessibility of the town's commercial centre.