

Safe Communities Foundation New Zealand



Dr Carolyn Coggan, *New Zealand*
Tania Peters, *New Zealand*
Laurie Gabites, *New Zealand*

Springfield Lakes International Safe Community Application & Site Visit Report

April, 2010

Table of Contents

Background	3
Criteria 1: Demonstrates partnerships and collaborations	4
Criteria 2: Long-term sustainable programmes	6
Criteria 3: High risk and vulnerable groups and environments	8
Criteria 4: Documentation of the frequency and causes of injuries	9
Criteria 5: Evaluation measures to assess effects of change	11
Criteria 6: Involvement in networks	12

Background

This application relates to the master planned communities of Springfield Lakes. The Springfield Lakes community has a current estimated population of 10,000 people and is expected to have a total population of 50,000 people on completion in 2020. Springfield Lakes is located 22 kilometers to the south-west of Brisbane and just north of Ipswich. Springfield Lakes is Australia's largest master planned community – for comparison purposes it is more than half the size of Cairns. The community has over 300 hectares of open space including hike and bike trails, playgrounds and lakes. A review of the master planned community websites www.springfieldlakes.com.au also contained further relevant and useful information to assist the review team.

The review team considered that, in both the application and site visits, the time and effort that had gone into addressing safety was evident. Drawing on the review of the application together with observations from the site visits, the remainder of this report provides details about how Springfield Lakes has met each of the six criteria developed by the WHO Collaborating Centre on Community Safety Promotion for accreditation as an International Safe Community (ISC).

Criteria 1: ISC must have an infrastructure based on partnership and collaboration, governed by a cross-sectional group that is responsible for safety promotion in the region.

For over 50 years, master planned communities have focused on active efforts to enhance collaboration and establish partnership models in the creation of sustainable and safe communities. This was well demonstrated during the application review and site visit. At the local level, Project Directors work with multi-skilled teams/working groups including dedicated specialists in community development, recreation and environmental health and safety. At Springfield Lakes a wide range of community stakeholders are involved in order to address issues specific to their community. For example, regionally, services such as Queensland Police, Queensland Health (Tropical Population Health Unit), Queensland Fire and Rescue Services, Queensland Ambulance, Queensland Transport, Queensland Injury Surveillance Unit, (QISU), and the Queensland Safe Community Support Centre (QSCSC) are involved. The involvement of regional safety services at Springfield Lakes was demonstrated during the site visit with many examples and supportive comments being received.

The review team was also pleased to observe first hand the strong level of collaboration that is occurring between the Springfield Lakes project team and the local Councils. From the initial stage of the development through to the extensive exit strategy, staff work comprehensively with Council staff to ensure residents and infrastructure are not only safe, but responsive to local needs. As Paul Pisasale, Mayor of the City of Ipswich, in which Springfield Lakes is located, commented to the review team: *"Delfin is an amazing company ... so responsive to building sustainable safe communities ... they care about the people who live in Springfield Lakes and more importantly they allow us to determine the community we want to be ... I am delighted to officially launch Greater Springfield Community Inc ... I encourage you all here today to join up so that you can be part of the solutions not the problem"*.

Residents and their families are comprehensively involved in many of the safety activities underway at Springfield Lakes. At Springfield Lakes, Springfield Lakes State School, Neighbourhood Watch, Kids First Aid, NAPCAN – Preventing Child Abuse, Springfield Lakes Police Beat, Springfield Lakes Community Centre, Springfield Women's Group, Springfield Lakes Family Day Care, Royal Life Saving Society and Ipswich City Council are the key local stakeholders. In addition, the Greater Springfield Community Inc. which comprises local residents, business owners and representatives of community groups, services clubs, not-for-profit organisations and churches, provides an appropriate forum to network the 30 agencies that currently provide various community services, including safety related initiatives to the area.

The extensive involvement of community partners, including the Ipswich City Council, Police, Queensland Fire and Rescue, Neighbourhood Watch, and Leisure Groups, and the way that the project team supports this community was evident during the Springfield Lakes Community Open Day, which was attended by members of the site review team. Comments made to the review team included: *"Springfield Lakes has had an excellent working*

relationship with the local police for over five years ... Since being formed over four years ago Springfield Lake Neighbourhood Watch has established a very close relationship with Springfield Lakes whose capable and friendly staff have always been wonderfully supportive of our activities ... they organise fantastic events ... we are passionate about seeing our region grow into a mature and strong community by bringing together all the existing resources of business, community, government, developers, our residents, key service providers, clubs and groups". Additionally, discussions with representatives from the Springfield Leisure Group provided a good example of a grassroots approach to community that appears to have been working very well for a number of years.

It was evident from the site visits, that the Project Teams draw together a wide-range of organisations and individuals with an interest in safety enhancement, in a partnership approach.

The application meets the indicators for criteria one. The review team was impressed with the way that the application, from pages 5-16 demonstrated the history, structure, roles, strategic vision and principles of Springfield Lakes. These sections of the application provided a good summary that was further strengthened by information and activities at the site visit.

The review team considered that the Springfield Lakes community is to be congratulated on the way that they promote the principles of the WHO Safe Community model through partnership with local councils, government agencies, non-government service providers, residents, and the business community. From both reviewing the application and especially during the site visit it was evident that Safe Communities initiatives at Springfield Lakes are community owned.

Criteria 2: ISC must have long-term sustainable programmes covering both genders and all ages, environments and situations.

The application and site visit comprehensively demonstrated the wide range of injury prevention and community safety initiatives underway in Springfield Lakes with a total of 25 initiatives covered. Pages 17-22 of the application include information on some of the initiatives by age group, by environment (home, road, work, waterways) and by intent (violence prevention). Following this, activity snapshots provide further details on four of these initiatives. Appendix Three (pages 48-61) of the application presents information on the 25 initiatives in tabular form. This table provides a clear resume of: programme and developer; what it addresses; population it targets; length of operation; reach of programme; results; and partners. The following is a list, summarised from Appendix Three, of initiatives from the Springfield Lakes ISC application by priority area:

Child Safety

- Child Protection Week (NAPCAN)
- Child Safety Handbook
- Child Safety Kit
- Communities for Children Initiative
- Kids First Aid
- Play a Part Project (NAPCAN)
- Safety Around Construction Sites
- Walking Bus

Disaster Preparedness and Response

- Queensland Fire & Rescue Information Sessions

Elderly Safety

- Springfield Women's Group
- Free Community CPR Awareness Training

Home and Leisure Safety

- Keep Watch (including a focus on water safety)
- Community seminars CPR for life and general first aid
- Springfield Lakes Neighbourhood Watch
- Springfield Women's Group
- Springfield Lakes Self Defense Karate Club

Occupational Safety

- National Safety Week
- School to Work Programme

Transport Safety

- School Walking Bus
- Springfield Lakes 'Road Watch' Programme

Minority Group

- Neighbourhood Watch

Sport and Recreation Settings

- Touch Football
- Keep Watch (Water Safety initiative)

Teenagers and Youth Adults

- School to work Programme
- Bluelight disco Dance Party

The site visit provided a wonderful opportunity to observe the enthusiasm and commitment from a wide range of community stakeholders. The challenges being faced by these groups working to improve community safety was evident, yet the level of achievement through their collaborative efforts was impressive.

For example, Springfield Lakes highlighted the challenges and opportunities of providing recreational water activities for residents. Appendix two of the application (pages 44-47) provides extensive information on how Springfield Lakes is leading the way in pool safety.

In the above case study and throughout the application, excellent community engagement and safe participation in a wide range of sporting and recreational activities were demonstrated. The emphasis by these this community to developing both a positive safety culture and incorporating safety by design is to be commended.

In addition to specific initiatives, there are a number of communication and community engagement mechanisms that are implemented to ensure that all stakeholders (including local residents) are continually aware of injury prevention and the various programmes and activities available to enhance individual, group and community safety. Two examples include the 'In the Safety Spotlight' newsletter which is produced monthly and the 'Welcome Information Kits' which contain both general items as well as important injury prevention and community safety information. At the site visit members were impressed with the up-to-date and comprehensive nature of the injury prevention topics included in the kit, as well as the range of speakers who participate in the welcome nights. The Welcome Kits included information on pool and other water safety issues, home safety, personal safety, child safety, road safety, being bushfire prepared, poisons information and contact details for a range of emergency and other community services.

This criteria has been met. Site visit members were also particularly impressed by the presentations related to child safety and road safety. These demonstrated effective collaboration using a continuous-improvement approach to building safer communities.

Criteria 3: ISC must have programmes that target high-risk groups and environments

The review team was satisfied with the information provided for criteria three. Springfield Lakes, has developed and delivered a range of activities that promote safety and prevent injuries to vulnerable groups in the community including: teenagers and young adults at risk; children; minority groups; people participating in sports and recreational settings; people at risk of injuries from natural disasters; and people living or working near high risk environments. Rationale utilising relevant data was evident for the high risk group/environments identified in this section. In the application (pages 23-26), a summary of some of the key activities was provided under the following headings:

- People working on construction sites
- Child Safety (Water, Home & Road)
- Minority Groups

For people working on construction sites Springfield Lakes undertook the following two initiatives: the 'School to Work' programme; and the 'Safe Work Week' community event.

For child safety, key activities included: 'Keep Watch'; the Springfield Lakes Child Safety handbook focused on preventing childhood abuse and neglect; the 'Walking Bus'; and the Springfield Lakes Water Safety Consortium. One example which demonstrates commitment to an identified high risk group (young children) and environment (home) is non-medicinal poisoning. Based on analysis of data by QISU, it was found that a quarter of all poisoning in the age group 0-5 years were due to common household cleaners. Consequently, in collaboration with the QSCSC, a Child Safety kit was developed to raise awareness of child safety issues around the family home, including non-medicinal poisoning. QSCSC, in conjunction with communities such as Springfield Lakes, also recognised and used the power of story-telling by highlighting the tragic story of Harrison Clark who lost his voice when in 2004, at just 18 months of age, he swallowed dishwashing detergent. Since that time, Harrison's family has continued to work with QSCSC to assist in promoting child and home safety awareness.

As Springfield Lakes is a multicultural community, in April 2009, to improve communication and ensure that minority groups receive safety messages, an eCommunity newsletter was developed and translated into Mandarin (Chinese) and Vietnamese languages.

This criteria has been met. However, while the application provides a good description of the programmes targeting high risk groups and environments, as well as good collaboration among partners, some of the programmes described appeared to lack scientific evidence as to effectiveness. This is not to say that evidence does not exist, just that it is hard to determine the overall effectiveness of some of the safety initiatives. At the site visit reviewers discussed how publishing best practices/evaluation findings in peer-reviewed scientific journals could be used as a basis for dissemination of Springfield Lakes safety initiatives to a global audience.

Criteria 4: ISC must have documentation on the frequency and causes of injuries.

The introduction and criteria four sections of this application provided documentation of the available demographic and injury data in Queensland (pages 5-12 and pages 27-33). At the site visit it was pleasing to see that local working parties identifies priority safety issues through research data and statistics, knowledge of existing initiatives that address the issues, and coordinates appropriate responses by sharing resources.

It was evident to the review team that the project team at Springfield Lakes have a commitment to monitoring and responding proactively to injuries. For example, a web based safety reporting system 'Safety Dashboard' provides a central reference point for all key safety data. This system found that at Queensland projects, between June 2006 and 2009, there was an equivalent of 31 days lost due to incidents, with the majority being categorised as slips and trips. The site visit team was pleased to see that appropriately, project managers consider staff and contractors to be part of the community while they are involved in the development of master planned communities.

All master planned communities also have a central complaints register, which is used by local project teams to respond to individual concerns and, where appropriate, to develop broader prevention measures. Analysis of the complaints register indicated that over the past 12 months, there had been 55 community complaints from within five Queensland master planned communities. Approximately half of the complaints registered related to community safety issues, such as disturbances in public places, road safety, and maintenance of public space, including graffiti and vandalism. The review team was pleased to note that information from this database was responded to by local project teams/working groups.

Springfield Lakes have also sourced and documented other relevant data to inform the development of their projects. The active participation of the QISU has been essential to this. They also monitor injury data from Queensland Health, Queensland Police Services, Queensland Transport and Local Councils. Data is being collected on the causes of injuries to adults and children. This information will then be used to identify and develop strategies for the effective communication of this information back to the community, with the aim being to raise awareness, educate and change behaviours resulting in fewer hospital presentations for injuries.

In the application, the documentation of appropriate data and analysis of injury risk, particularly with regard to child injuries, road traffic injuries and workplace injuries and how this data was used to inform prevention projects, is provided. For example, with regard to child injuries, QISU data indicated that unintentional injuries are the leading cause of death in Queensland children up to four years of age. This finding, together with the higher proportion of young children living within the Springfield Lakes community, has informed many of the proactive child safety strategies developed. During the site visit, the review team was impressed with the numerous examples of how the monitoring of child safety data

has informed the development of many safety activities with a particular focus on preventing injuries to children within the home environment, water safety, pedestrian and bicycle safety.

As indicated in the application, falls for people aged 65 years and over account for approximately 60% of all emergency department presentations in Queensland. While Springfield Lakes has a lower than average population aged over 65 years, it was evident that a wide range of recreational options that encourage people in the 45 to 65 age group to adopt an active lifestyle and prevent injuries in the future was a focus.

This criteria has been met. What impressed the review team was that analysis of data at Springfield Lakes is solutions focused rather than merely focused on counting the problem. The solutions focused emphasis is a result of the impressive collaboration established between QISU, QSCSC and the local project teams. The site visits reinforced the review team's impression that data informed the establishment of priorities and allowed communities to be responsive to new and emerging situations. This is commendable.

Criteria 5: ISC must have evaluation measures to assess the programmes, processes and the effects of change

This criteria has been met. The review team was pleased to note the importance that the application placed on taking an evidence-based approach to the undertaking of appropriate accountability and evaluation processes and noted the number of case studies that have been highlighted or included throughout the application and appendices (pages 33-38 and Appendix 2 and 3 pages 44-61). Research, impact assessments, case studies and ROAD reviews in order to assess their programmes, processes and the effects of change at Springfield Lakes have been undertaken. These have included: conducting research to improve social capital; identifying ways in which new residents might receive appropriate injury prevention and safety messages; leading a consortium to measure community attitudes to swimming pool safety; utility of findings from a pedestrian traffic study; and the ROAD reviews which are a mandatory part of these communities.

Findings from ROAD reviews often result in changes to street design for traffic and pedestrian safety, water safety issues (e.g. the introduction of safety ledges and grad rails), and the application of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles. Additionally, in response to concerns regarding risks around water, particularly for child immersion, a 'Waterways Operations and Management Manual' was developed for master planned communities. This manual provides a framework for the management of waterways in all projects aimed at minimising the risk to public health and safety, educating the community and promoting community stewardship of the waterways. In terms of road safety, Michael Chapman, General Manager Design and Environment, stated: *"We design communities for people, cars are secondary ... if you can get people talking to each other, wanting to be part of the community then you are creating safe communities ... the more people interact the safer the place is ... building social capital and community safety through environment design"*.

Selected evaluation findings summarised in the application include:

- o Increased awareness of safety issues.
- o Enhanced safety and reduced fear of crime.
- o Increased representation of people from diverse cultural backgrounds in the Neighbourhood Watch group.

Even though the application provided a good description of research and evaluation measures used for some of the initiatives, there appeared to be inadequate evaluation for other programmes. This issue was discussed during the site visit and it was suggested that impact evaluations to assess changes be conducted. One way of addressing this could be to work in partnership with a local university or TAFE college. However, overall the review team was extremely impressed with the 'continuous-improvement model' adopted by Springfield Lakes to improving safety.

Criteria 6: ISC must demonstrate ongoing participation in national and international safe community networks.

This criteria has been met. Springfield Lakes have documented the local, regional, national and international networks that they are part of. Locally, project teams have established networks with a wide range of stakeholders. Individual community members are also provided with a 'Welcome Information Kit' that contains both general items such as a Community Services Directory as well as important injury prevention and community safety information. Additionally, each local project team initiates the development of a community newsletter and undertakes regular community safety events.

Regionally, since 2006, a Memorandum of Understanding with the Queensland Safe Community Support Centre which includes a commitment to provide funding support to specific projects and to promote the principles of the Safe Community model has been effectively operating.

The review team was pleased to note that members from the Springfield Lakes project team have expanded their reach regionally within the State of Queensland and have made a commitment to share best practices and new approaches with other communities in Australia. For example, as previously mentioned, in Springfield Lakes, the Neighbourhood Watch e-community newsletter is translated into Mandarin (Chinese) and Vietnamese languages, which provides a good example for other culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Nationally, since 2008, national leaders from the master planned community of Springfield Lakes has had a Statement of Intent with the Australian Safe Communities Foundation Inc which includes an obligation to demonstrate a shared commitment to safety and injury prevention in communities across Australia. Project teams have also attended national injury prevention and safety promotion conferences/symposium and strategic meetings. Nationally, a number of communication mechanisms to ensure that all stakeholders are continually aware of injury prevention and the various programmes and activities available to enhance individual, group and community safety is provided by these communities.

Internationally, national leaders from master planned communities such as Springfield Lakes, has been an active participant in, and was one of the sponsors of, the 17th International Safe Communities Conference held in Christchurch, New Zealand in 2008. The review team would like to encourage the ongoing involvement of these communities at the ISC international level.

The review team considered that the international profile of Springfield Lakes will need to be strengthened. One way to do this would be to submit regular news items to the International Safe Communities Monthly Newsletter. This could be in the form of brief reports on initiatives and activities and could highlight when important events are undertaken such as the Community Safety Days.