

## **Additional Information on Goodna**

## **Introduction**

This information is based on material compiled by the Social Policy and Research Centre (SPRC) in early 2009. Some of the information may have since changed.

**Section 1** outlines geographical, industrial and demographic data related to Goodna and the surrounding area. The information draws heavily on data collected through the 2006 Census.

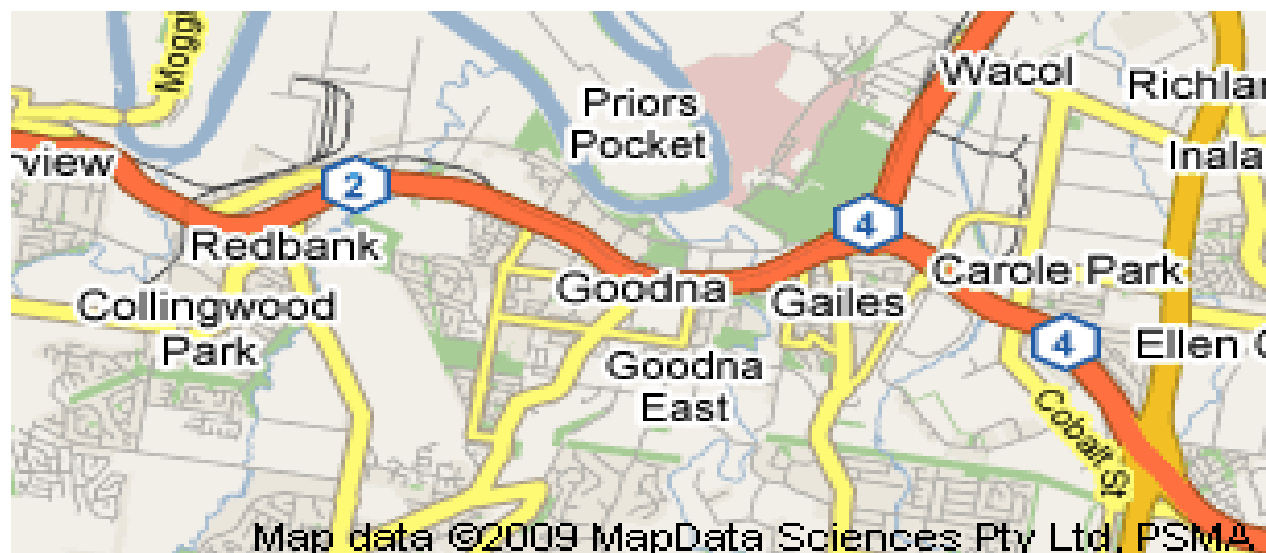
**Section 2** discusses quotes sourced from conversations held between SPRC and residents and service providers in Goodna. This section has been included for illustrative purposes only. The views presented should be interpreted as the views of those who participated in the discussions. At times, quotes from these discussions have also been used to add descriptive information to other areas of the report.

**Section 3** discusses the local service environment in Goodna, with a focus on perceived integration of the services in the area and the impact of the 2000-2003 Goodna Service Integration Project.

# 1. The Geography, Demography and Local issues of Goodna

## 1.1. Geography

**Figure 1: Map of Goodna and surrounding area**



In 1959 Goodna became part of Ipswich City and the Ipswich Motorway was built shortly after. The development of this motorway has contributed to the increase in population of Goodna and the consequent development of extensive public housing in the area (Goodna SIP, 2003).

The Ipswich Motorway links Goodna with Ipswich and Brisbane CBD. Goodna is located about 14 kilometres from Ipswich and less than 30 kilometres from the Brisbane CBD. It is bounded by the Brisbane River and the suburbs of Wacol, Redbank, Carole Park, Bellbird Park and Gales.

Goodna has two main roads – Queen St and Smiths Road. These two roads are where the majority of services are located, including the main St Ives Shopping Centre. St Ives includes a Woolworths, several cafes/take away outlets, discount shops, post office, financial lenders, medical services, government and other services. The retail outlets included five payday lenders and a cash converters. The discount shops carried relatively cheap clothing and day-to-day items and there were no shops selling new clothes.

## 1.2. Demographics

The 2006 Census shows a total population of 7939 persons in the Goodna area. The proportion of men and women is roughly similar to that for Australia as a whole, however the Indigenous population is nearly three times the Australian average.

**Table 1.1: Characteristics of Goodna Population**

	Males	Females	Indigenous Persons	Total Number of Persons
Percentage	49.5	50.5	6.0	
Number	3932	4007	477	7939

Source: ABS 2006 Census Quickstats: Goodna (Ipswich City)

In total, Goodna has 2043 families. Of these nearly one-third are sole parent families. This is more than twice the Australian average which stands at 15.8 per cent. The population is relatively young and Goodna has significantly fewer couples without children (27.3%) than the Australian average (37.2%) (ABS, 2006). Ten per cent of children in the area are aged 0-4 years and 17 per cent are aged 5 to 14 years. Both these figures are significantly higher than the national average, which is just over six per cent for under fives and 14 per cent for those aged 5-14 (ABS Census 2006).

**Table 1.2: Family Characteristics**

	Couples – with children	Couples – no children	Sole parent families	Total Number of families
Percentage	40.9	27.3	29.7	
Number	836	558	606	2043

Source: ABS 2006 Census Quickstats: Goodna (Ipswich City)

Goodna has a somewhat larger proportion of residents born outside Australia than the national average. Around 65% of persons in Goodna were born in Australia, close to one third were born in another country. The main countries of birth include New Zealand (7.7%), England (3.8%), Vietnam (3.7%), Samoa (3.1%) and the Philippines (0.9%). These figures are significantly higher when compared with the rest of the Australian population, particularly for New Zealand, Samoa and Vietnam (ABS Census 2006). During SPRC discussions with residents and service providers it was suggested that there are increasing numbers of African new arrivals residing in Goodna, however, this is not yet reflected in these figures.

**Table 1.3: Goodna: Population by Selected Countries of Birth**

	Australia	New Zealand	England	Vietnam	Samoa	Philippines
Goodna	64.7	7.7	3.8	3.7	3.1	0.9
Australia	70.9	2.0	4.4	0.8	0.1	0.6

Source: ABS 2006 Census Quickstats: Goodna (Ipswich City)

### 1.3. Local issues

#### *Educational institutions*

Goodna has several primary schools, one high school and the Goodna State Special School. The closest further education institutions are the Bremer TAFE Campus and a University of Queensland Campus in Ipswich, and a campus of Central Queensland University in Springfield.

#### *Transport*

Transport around Goodna and surrounding suburbs is by car, train and bus. The Ipswich Motorway links Goodna with Ipswich and the Brisbane CBD. This motorway splits Goodna into two sections. The train station is located on the north side closest to

the Brisbane River. The majority of the housing, schools and other services are located on the south side of the motorway. Bus services also operate in Goodna.

### *Community Renewal Project*

The Goodna/Gailes area also underwent a Community Renewal Project between 1998 and 2004. A Community Action Plan was developed in consultation with the residents, services and government and 63 projects were funded (to the value of \$2.4 million). Some of the projects funded are listed on the Queensland Government website.<sup>1</sup> One example was the Caravan Park Program which provided outreach services, youth information services and health care services to caravan residents.

### *Employment in Goodna*

The official unemployment rate in Goodna is currently 9.2 per cent, which is significantly higher than the national average (5.2 per cent). Figures show that most of those in work are employed as labourers, in a trade, as technicians or as machine operators (ABS Census, 2006). This is linked to the main industries that surround the Goodna area including the Dinmore Meatworks and factories. There is also quite a high rate of employment in the community and personal support sectors (9.9 per cent) which may be linked to the Mental Health and Prison facilities located in the neighbouring suburb of Wacol. In the Dinmore/Riverview area there is a large meatworks, which is also another significant local employer.

### *Housing*

In terms of accommodation, close to 50 per cent of dwellings are rented or rent-free. This is significantly higher than the percentage of Australian rented or rent-free dwellings (27.2 per cent). This reflects the high levels of public housing in the Goodna area. Most of these rented dwellings are managed either through a real estate agent or State/Territory housing authority (ABS Census, 2006) and are occupied by families rather than lone person or group householders (ABS Census, 2006).

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.communityrenewal.qld.gov.au/communities/completed/goodna\\_gailes.shtml](http://www.communityrenewal.qld.gov.au/communities/completed/goodna_gailes.shtml)

## **2. SPRC research staff discussions with residents and service providers: barriers to employment and education**

### **2.1. Description of the sample**

Three types of discussions were used to gain an understanding of the views of residents and service providers in the area. These included group and one-to-one discussions with families, and one-to-one discussions with stakeholders in the area. All of the families were recruited from a list provided by DEEWR identifying income support recipients in the Goodna area. Participants were telephoned by researchers from the SPRC inviting them to participate in discussions to talk about the main barriers to employment in the area, employment services available, and availability of services more generally.

In total there were 11 participants in the two discussion groups; 8 in the first group and 3 in the second. The age of participants ranged from 23 to 54 years of age and all of the participants were female. Several male participants were recruited but did not attend. Many of the participants were sole parents. The length of time living in Goodna also varied, some participants having been there less than 12 months and others having lived there their whole lifetime. There were two participants of Indigenous background and several from a non-English speaking background, including African. In addition to the two discussion groups, four one-to-one discussions were held. All of these discussions were conducted in the family home and all participants were female, ranging in age from 20 to 33 years of age. These interviews were 30-45 minutes long.

One-to-one interviews were also conducted with 11 service providers in Goodna or areas nearby. These included employment services, family support and counselling services and government agencies. Stakeholders were asked about the services that they provide, what they see as the main service gaps in the area, barriers to families finding employment and what can be done to help jobless families gain employment.

## **2.2. Employment**

### **2.2.1. Attitudes to employment**

The majority of participants were willing to undertake paid work, but few were actively looking for work. Generally, participants saw the income from employment as beneficial for their families and the social participation of a job was personally attractive. However, for many participants, this willingness to work applies to a time in the future, when their pre-school children reach school age or their health or other personal circumstances allow them to take up work.

The service providers that were spoken to were not confident of the willingness of some of their clients to actively seek work due largely to very real obstacles to employment. For example, one provider commented that:

...their basic needs have never been met and having them actually be prepared to go and work in a job is not going to happen unless those really basic needs are met. (Service provider)

### **2.2.2. Transport**

Transport was perhaps the most frequently mentioned problem in discussions. Participants talked about how transport affected their capacity not only for employment but also for shopping, taking their children to school and undertaking training. The cost of transport was mentioned less frequently.

Participants talked about how bus and train services do not align with shift work, which is a major type of employment in Goodna. They also talked about the combined impact of the public transport and the lack of a public high school in Goodna. One participant who accompanied her daughter to the nearby Redbank Plains school noted that it took her two buses and more than an hour each day.

One provider shared his perceptions of how the local transport affects employment prospects:

OK, the majority of the people that we engage are looking for semi-skilled to non-skilled type labour, factory work. And I suppose the frustrating scenario that we have here, geographically, [is that] we are ...close to a quite large industrial precinct, right, being Wacol/Carol Park. But the issue there is literally transportation because even though we've got a train line, the train line sort of goes to just right on the outer edge of that precinct and if somebody was to catch the train and then have to walk from the train station to their place of work, they might even have a five mile walk. (Service provider)

### **2.2.3. Child care**

The area appears to be well supplied with child care, including care of children from cultural minorities. Participants talked about the need for more before school care and for help looking after children during night shifts, rather than after-school care. This is consistent with the use of shift work as a major type of employment in the area.

Discussion participants also mentioned the need for care during school vacations.

Interviewer: Are there any other things that would help [you get back into employment]?

Child care open during the school holidays. When I was a kid they had a Salvation Army Centre and over school holidays it was open. Parents paid a couple of bucks per kid and it was like we'd go out on excursions, like they take us all out on a bus and go bushwalking or something for a the day.

They're so expensive.

And they're so many waiting lists. If I wanted to say put my daughter in for day care vacation care I'd have to put her in now so by the time we get to the day of the holidays she's got a spot there, you know. And then you can't be guaranteed to have it for five days and on the holidays what are you supposed to do with your kids when you've got to go to work. (Resident)

#### **2.2.4. Labour market issues**

Women with children below school age also see barriers stemming from the job market itself, such as work hours. The participants in one focus group raised job sharing as a way of meeting employers' needs while enabling them to work shorter than full-time hours.

I've been hearing stories where you have one job but two people take the same job, like they split it between themselves so you can both work, you know what I mean.

Facilitator: Job sharing?

Job sharing yeah, where one week one would take the morning shift, the other week the other one would take the afternoon shift. So at least you can spend time with your kids and try to still keep your head above water but you're still working.

Facilitator: So is job sharing something that would be helpful for families?

Yeah, a lot of parents. Even fathers for that matter because then it takes the stress of their backs for having to work a 67-hour week and you know coming home in a real crappy mood and then they think, you know not really wanting to spend time [with the kids]...(Resident)

Another concern raised in discussions was women's age and employer discrimination. Some participants saw themselves as competing for jobs on an uneven playing field in which they are in competition with younger job seekers.

They'd rather hire an 18 year old.

It's cheaper. It's cheaper to hire a teenager or an 18 year old than it is to hire someone that's over that age... No one wants to hire you because you're too expensive to pay...

Or if you have no experience...

But the way I look [at it], I look at the employers, it's like you've got no experience. Excuse me, I'm a cook, a cleaner, I'm an account, I do this, I'm a mechanic, you know what I mean...

Basically you are but they don't see that as a qualification. They see it as stay-at-home mum, mums as mums that stay at home. But you are so much, you are a gardener....(Resident)

One service provider mentioned that some people have doubts about the benefits of employment.

And you know when the plusses and minuses are taken in for a little bit of gain that they take for the extra work they put in, a lot of people think it's not worth it.... They might only be making say a total of \$100 gross or net a week, and they're thinking, well is that really worth it for the mucking around they had to do dropping the kids off to child care and stressing out to be back in time... If I get caught up with work because I get penalised every time I go over, if I'm late picking up my kids, and that sort of stuff...(Service provider)

### **2.2.5. Education and training**

For most discussion group participants and interviewees education and training appeared to be an aspiration.

Like if your kids have just started high school or something like that, you know what I mean, your priority should have been ages ago to try to at least get some study done and try to have a bit of a life because also it's not just the employment or anything, but even study can get you out there meeting people and getting back into everyday life...

I think there's a lot of preparation before you start going out there. We've lost most of our self confidence so stuff like building some esteem and learning how to take care of yourself ...

Yeah we sort of forget about ourselves, do everything.

That's me. I've got a job at Woolworths packing shelves now, I had this for a year anyway,... but my thing is going to be the ... chopping and changing the hours, that's my nightmare, but I didn't even finish year 9, I've got dyslexia, I can't read properly, I can't write properly, so that's my whole [problem]. I got a choice of making sandwiches or packing shelves, basically that's it....  
(Resident)

Confidence and skills in computing and internet use appeared to be strongly age-related among participants. Younger participants reported no difficulty, and a number of them had computers at home. Older women were more likely to express a feeling that a lack of skills and access excludes them from opportunities. They mentioned that many of the large retail employers in the area require job applications to be submitted on-line. One participant suggested that the government could assist families by providing a rented computer or one that could be paid off.

Rent one [a computer] or they give you one but you pay it off through your payments something like that, something to motivate you, you could say because sometimes you get in like a rut being a house mum and you need some motivation to get out there because you're just used to being locked away; away from people.

### **2.2.6. Employment assistance**

Despite widespread recognition that service providers can make training available, discussion group participants expressed scepticism about the genuineness of the assistance offered by job providers. Their comments reflected a belief about a lack of recognition of their individual needs and aspirations.

My dad has just turned 50 and he's going through a depression so he went [to] a psychologist... as well as looking for work. But they always try to get him into storeman work or bullshit jobs, you know, not something that he really wants to get into...

Did he end up doing a course?

He did, he's ...finished his grade 11 and 12... but now they've just given up on him.

... When you go for a job, it's like here take any job because you need a job.

Basically they don't give you a choice.

...they should really also try and find your natural abilities and go with that and your natural interests. (Residents)

### **2.3. Deeper needs and barriers**

Service providers who participated in discussions, particularly those providing family and community services, saw the needs of jobless families in the area as being at a more basic level than those discussed in relation to practical barriers to employment.

So there is a whole range, in my experience. There's people who are unemployed and have a whole lot of problems and issues, that unless you identify and actually start to address some of those, they are never going to be able to hold down a job. Some of them are second or third generation unemployed. They have histories of, for example, possibly being kids in care and so they have traumatic histories of childhood abuse. (Service provider)

A lot of our families really don't plan ahead, they just live day to day, you know, if they get through today, then they have to get through tomorrow. They don't plan. They got that federal government funding before Christmas, the bonuses and things, well pretty much all of our families couldn't afford their school uniforms and school books for the beginning of the school year...

(Service provider)

Community service providers noted that their clients have problems with basic literacy, mental illness and disability, and above all enduring poverty. Work can entail transporting and accompanying clients to appointments with basic services across Goodna and its surrounding areas.

In addition to these issues, there are three large correctional institutions near Goodna and this has led to stigmatisation of the residential population. The Service Integration Project, conducted in the area in 2000-2003 (SIP, 2003, discussed further below), examined the idea that there was a disproportionate number of ex-offenders in the area and found that this was not the case. However, the stigmatisation associated with this belief was evident in some discussions. One service provider commented on their perceptions of providing services to ex-offenders.

It's pretty much a resettlement type scenario because you've got to look after accommodation and income and if you can get those two areas addressed reasonably quickly that can then lead into better resettlement in the community. ... One of the unfortunate scenarios at the moment [is that] ... when they come out they're pretty much allowed six weeks to do what they need to and what we see from our perspective [is that] it's just six weeks where people can get frustrated about not being able to achieve the goals that they've set before they're released and realising that the society is on the point of turning their back on them, and they get into strife again. (Service provider)

Participants also talked about the problems of crime and racially motivated conflict in the area. In the discussions, references to these issues extended from personal discomfort with the increasing cultural diversity of the area, to observations about tensions between Aboriginal and Pacific Island communities, and allegations of gang violence. The members of one focus group see the local shopping centre as unsafe, and said they prefer to shop elsewhere. Many of the local services are in or near this shopping centre.

### **3. Local services**

Goodna is a service hub for its region, with most of the key Commonwealth and Queensland services having offices in the area. This includes Centrelink, the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Services, the Queensland Department of Child Safety, a Community Health Centre and at least two police stations. Family services include men's relationship counselling, community care, and disability services. There are dedicated youth services with programs including youth accommodation and counselling. A community centre provides home to a range of activities and services, many oriented to cultural diversity. There is another active community centre in nearby Gailles which is also open to Goodna residents. The poverty of the area is reflected in the active and well known operations of several agencies providing food and other material relief, as well as five commercial small-loans agencies.

Perhaps the most important gap in services identified is a dedicated service to support youth employment and young people's transition from school to work. Local youth services are crisis oriented, and employment services lack specialised youth sections, particularly for those that had left school early. A service provider also suggested that some of the employment programs offered for young people in the area were not basic enough and targeted young people that were already 'job ready'. There does not appear to be a locally accessible JPET service.

The second gap in services identified is a local library, present service being limited to a mobile van, with facilities giving low-cost internet access and perhaps basic training in computer and internet skills.

#### **3.1. The integration of services**

As a local service network, services in Goodna appear to be relatively well integrated. Service representatives seem to have good knowledge of the range of agencies and their roles and policies. There is a regular interagency meeting at which the attendance of family and community services is particularly well maintained.

Based on comments from participants however, there appears to be room for improvement in service integration. Asked how services work together in the area, one service provider replied:

Well pretty much at the moment a lot of the services just work independently with one another....You know as much good will as is potentially out there in the community, and wanting to do that with the contractual compliance and just the focus that you need to run your own business, it doesn't allow any community good will because you're so focused on the KPI's you need to achieve right, and the compliances with the Department. (Service provider)

#### **3.2. The 2000-2003 Goodna Service Integration Project**

In 2000-2003 the City of Ipswich and the University of Queensland undertook a major community development program aimed at improved functioning of community services in Goodna. Titled the Goodna Services Integration Project (SIP), it worked at multiple levels over the three year period (SIP, 2003). Project activities ranged from community consultation and a project to extend community use of the Goodna pool to systematic development of training and relationship building and a program of measurement and modelling of service integration goals. The education and training of local service managers of public and non-government services was a

key aspect of the program, and over the three years of the project three cohorts of local leaders qualified for a dedicated Graduate Certificate in Social Science (Inter-professional Leadership) through which they aligned their activities toward commonly identified goals.

Employment was not a priority area of the Goodna SIP, which had been precipitated by community concerns following a violent crime. However, its community consultations identified more effective connection of Goodna residents to jobs and training as an important issue, and a Jobs Forum was held to identify issues and map an action plan. This aspect of the program was less effective than others. As noted in the Final Report of the SIP project:

An honest appraisal of this aspect of SIP's action learning would confirm that the jobs and training area was a difficult area in which to affect (sic) change through service integration initiatives, even with a strong sense of collaboration amongst stakeholders. Undoubtedly, the influence of key prevailing factors well beyond the scope of local service providers such as global economic reform was significant here but more micro-level issues such as the use and provision of adequate public transport was an intransigent problem in Goodna still to be adequately resolved. (p.65)

Most of the active participants in the Goodna SIP have now left the area, but the project has a positive legacy. The area service structure appears to be stronger and more effectively integrated than previously, especially regarding the work of its family and community service agencies. One of these agencies is itself a product of the SIP project, and is now an enduring part of its fabric of support services.