20 Clues to Creating and Maintaining a Vibrant Community

1. A group of local passionate community builders who provide leadership and are committed to spending their time, energy and other resources it will take to make positive local development a reality.

2. A positive ‘can – do’ community mindset that focuses on optimism, belief, expectation, hope, ‘we are in it together’, and ‘the glass is half full not half empty’.

3. Continuous renewal and development of local leadership, especially young people and women.

4. A shared community vision of the future, coupled with widespread resident participation and support.

5. A willingness to embrace change, seek smarter ways, experiment, make changes, welcome alternative thinking, take risks and invest in the future.

6. Opportunity obsession - that never ending search for new and appropriate ideas, development options and possibilities and a smart consumption of outside resources.

7. Recognition of healthy and sustainable community behaviours such as inclusive community participation, consensus decision making, win-win solutions, collaboration and continuous stewardship of resources.

8. Mapping and identification of the assets, capacities, skills and passions of the community and its residents.

9. A focus on youth development and their active meaningful participation in the community.

10. Welcoming and integration of newcomers into the community.

11. The continual recruitment, involvement, development and recognition of volunteers.

12. Evidence of community pride and confidence in terms of physical presentation and local investment.

13. Recognition of the importance of local business vitality through actions of appreciation and support.

14. A practical development agenda which includes bite size and medium to long term initiatives, and continuously evolves through regular consultation and participatory planning initiatives.

15. A local development organisation responsible for facilitation, coordination and management of local economic and social development.

16. The identification and promotion of a clear and unique marketable identity based on the community’s point(s) of difference.

17. Forging of partnerships with neighbouring communities for collaborative action and shared learning.

18. Strong belief in, and support for lifelong local education opportunities.

19. Presence of a positive local newspaper, matched by the ability of local people to utilise all forms of the media effectively.

20. A positive and proactive local government council which takes seriously its leadership role in building a healthy and strong community, and is viewed as a ‘facilitator’ rather than ‘regulator’.

(Based on work undertaken by Bank of I.D.E.A.S. with 1000 rural communities throughout Australia and overseas over the last 15 years)