A comprehensive investigation of how best to provide sustainable and liveable communities in South East Queensland has revealed the need for diversity in planning and housing.

The study carried out in a number of local government areas explored how medium density infill development could increase access to home ownership and contribute to sustainable urban living.

The Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) said the Liveable Compact Cities Project carried out by the SEQ Council of Mayors addressed the challenges and complexities posed by growth.

PIA Queensland President Kate Isles congratulated the SEQ Council of Mayors on carrying out the project and said the findings support the need for balance in planning debates.

"Affordability, housing supply and demand, market drivers and changes in demographics in a number of Council areas were studied in this project," Ms Isles said.

"If there is a bottom line in the study it’s the requirement for a diversity of housing products through strategic medium density development.

"This is totally in line with PIA philosophy in highlighting the various opportunities in and around Brisbane for creative infill urban renewal that should be included in the planning mix."

The Liveable Compact Cities Project found that changing demographics in South East Queensland (particularly the ageing population and couple households with no children) is likely to increase demand for units and semidetached housing products.

But the study also notes that the demand for detached dwellings is also projected to grow albeit at a proportionately slower rate.

The report notes that people still aspire to live in a detached house in a central location, but more and more there is a necessary ‘trade-off’ between prices and incomes mean an increasing number of people are looking for semi-detached, attached or apartment dwellings.

Ms Isles said one of the corner stones in planning medium density and infill areas in today's modern cities is to ensure the right facilities, the proper infrastructure and services are provided.

"This study found that people are attracted to increased amenity and that there are cost of living benefits attached to being near employment, schools, shops and services," she said.

"These new options make it a less attractive proposition to buy a cheaper detached house in the outer suburbs only to find that transport costs are greater because of the need to travel greater distances.

"Today’s well planned communities provide for healthier lifestyles with the provision of recreational facilities, walkability with proximity of shops, restaurants and commercial options.

"Proper infrastructure with good connectivity through well run public transport are all on the planning wish list and the Liveable Compact Cities Project indicates this is what people are beginning to demand.

"Anybody involved in the planning, building, urban design or development industries should have a look at the findings in this report."

Media Contact: Geoff Mullins at Pan Communications 0402 070 225