

ORDINARY MEETING 5 MAY 2015	5.13
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REPORT FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Linda Cardew – Chief Executive Officer #453897

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council receives and notes the report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report presents an outline of the operational initiatives and progress made by Council's administration during mid March to end April 2015.

BACKGROUND:

In Council's first year an overview of the administration's operations was presented to Council on a regular basis. The aim of these reports is to communicate how the administration is managing the diverse activities and challenges arising in the course of Council's business, and to summarise work in progress and the milestones achieved.

As in 2014, the administration continues to extend an open invitation to the community to provide feedback, at any time, on any aspect of Council's service delivery, or on broader issues that pertain directly to Council's business. The organisational goal of continual improvement will be always better informed if staff have a greater understanding of the community's observations, and so we welcome and encourage all comments.

REPORT:

CEO UNIT

The CEO Unit continues to be proactively involved with community initiatives and economic development opportunities.

Community Partners and Participation

Officers have provided support and guidance to Parent and Community Engagement (PaCE) program in developing Draft Strategic Plan to address items raised in the previously held parent and student forums.

The Bloomfield Track Steering Committee has met twice in the last six weeks finalising planning and program timelines. This initiative involves collaboration between Douglas Shire Council, Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council, Cook Shire Council, Wet Tropics Management Authority (WTMA) and Jabalbina Yalanji Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC. Future involvement will also include Tourism Port Douglas Daintree (TPDD).

The Work Placement Agreement that is currently in place between Council and NEATO has seen the introduction of a new supervisor and discussions regarding the extension of the work placement program that is due to end 30 June 2015.

Officers from the CEO Unit have been involved in a number of initiatives and networks since 24 March 2015:

- First consignment of recycled mobile phones and tablets sent to the Aussie Recycle Program. Funds raised from this initiative will be donated to the Mayor's Xmas Appeal.
- Participated in the recruitment process of the new PaCE Coordinator
- Worked with Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) Reef Guardian program to implement the project where professional photos of Council staff carrying out various tasks which protect the reef have been captured and will be used in both Council and GBRMPA educational programs
- Commenced planning with the NAIDOC committee for the 2015 program of events
- Planning with Mossman Gorge Interagency Network to conduct a Job Expo in Mossman Gorge and Mossman
- Met with TPDD and Douglas Chamber of Commerce to discuss the 'Access Douglas' Directory
- Sport and Recreation Reference Group meeting for Mossman Gorge PCYC program
- Attendance at the CAN meeting, the Liquor Accord, Youth Network, Public Safety, Indigenous Inter Agency, Douglas Inc.

Planning has also commenced for the identification of operational initiatives and partners for the 2015 -2016 Operational Plan and associated budget.

Events

The CEO Unit has spent considerable time working with the RSL to developing a program of activities commemorating the 100th Anniversary of Gallipoli Landing.

Staff have:

- Coordinated Anzac Day services including free community breakfasts to commemorate 100th anniversary of Gallipoli Landing in Mossman and Cow Bay. Approximately 1400 people attended Mossman Dawn Service, approximately 800 people attended the free community breakfast in Mossman and approximately 1200 people attended Port Douglas Ceremony. Approximately 230 people attended Dawn Service and free breakfast in Cow Bay.
- Produced a 52-page limited edition *Diggers of Douglas* book to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Gallipoli landing. Remaining copies of this book can be purchased for \$10 from Council's Administration office.
- Produced an eight-minute *Diggers of Douglas* video screened at Port Douglas & Cow Bay community breakfasts.

Officers also worked extensively with the Historical Society to assist with the launch of the *Diggers of Douglas* touchscreens.

Council's Communication/Event Officer and the Research & Project Officer coordinated the activities and worked in collaboration with the RSL, SES, the Historical Society and various areas of Council to develop and implement the wonderful tribute to the men, woman and animals that sacrificed their lives. I extend my appreciation to staff for their untiring work and commitment to these projects in order to make them such a success. Thank you.

There are also a number of major events being coordinated through the CEO Unit, including Carnivale commencing 22 May to 31 May 2015, the Ironman events including the Coral Coast Triathlon and the triple R commencing Sunday 7 June and Sunday 14 June 2015. Discussions with two event organisers for additional events to the Shire's calendar have also commenced.

Planning is also underway for Council's next Citizenship Ceremony scheduled for 21 May 2015.

Economic Development

Officers have been involved with a number of initiatives that include but are not limited to:

- Meeting with TPDD, the Douglas Chamber of Commerce and theSpace to discuss and prepare for the business planning workshop to be held on 12 June in Port Douglas.
- Announcement of the planned expansion of the Kiosk @ Port, the introduction of a co-working space called “Space Port” and the future introduction of a Council customer service facility. This initiative will encourage library usage and offer students, community groups, small business, and work from home business the opportunity to hire a temporary desk space in a comfortable, central area.
- Attendance at the Cook Shire Council Economic Development forum.
- Assist with research and development of concept for the Mossman Town Centre upgrade.
- Finalisation of the Access Douglas and “Missed Business” Resource – launch date to be determined.
- Discussion with event planners regarding introduction of new events in the Shire.
- Progression of the Bloomfield Track interpretive signage project

Funding

The second round of the Community Support Program closed on 2 March 2015. There was a good response to the information and grant writing session that was held on 5 February, with a number of those that attended submitting an application. The Regional Arts Development Fund also closed on the 2 March with a number of projects submitted. These applications have been assessed and will be presented at Council’s Ordinary meeting on 5 May 2015.

Officers have taken feedback from the *Arts in Douglas – Have your say!* survey to formulate the 2015 – 2016 RADF funding application. This will be presented at the 5 May 2015 Council meeting.

Web site and Facebook

Council’s web site is continually being updated with new features and tools to ensure we are keeping our communities informed of the changes and opportunities for the Shire.

Some of the updates have included the new:

- Activities Map - <http://douglas.qld.gov.au/business/major-projects/>
- NDRRA Activity Map - <http://douglas.qld.gov.au/activity-map/ndrra-activity-map/>
- Activity Map - <http://douglas.qld.gov.au/activity-map/>
- Customer Service Charter
- *Access Douglas* and *Missed Business*

Council’s Facebook page is the most immediate means of communicating with our communities. Our recent top posts have been the Mossman Dawn Service photo and a number of posts associated with Local Laws. “*The Things Local Law Officers would like you to know*” has proven a very successful means of communicating in an informal manner as to why the laws are in place. Council has posted 46 items since 23 March, with a total reach of 45,948. We have 1686 followers which has increase from 1648.

CORPORATE SERVICES

GOVERNANCE

Workplace Health & Safety

Recent work undertaken within the Workplace Health & Safety (WH&S) Unit has included examining our outdoor Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) standard issue. Tendering for the supply of an outdoor uniform is expected to take place in June of this year. Heat absorption and heat retention testing has been conducted on the current uniforms with the navy blue testing significantly higher than the lighter yellow. Following this testing a PPE trial was commenced and is continuing with block colours in shirts being tested along with different trousers. This should lay the foundation to get a more comfortable uniform and may provide the chance to introduce a more recognisable “brand” for outdoor staff.

Updating asbestos registers has been identified as another key focus area. It was agreed at the recent WH&S Committee Meeting that further work would be undertaken to identify any omissions and rectification actions that Council needs to address.

Confined Space Medicals have been conducted to facilitate the training of Wastewater and Water staff in this high risk area.

A Safety Management System has been completed, with the input of our staff and officers from Maritime Safety, for Council’s small maritime vessel. The relevant staff will be inducted according to this Safety Management System in the immediate future. The primary function of this vessel is weed survey and control, however it is also utilised for water sampling.

Human Resources

In late March Council appointed four new female employees:

- Governance (Frontline Services Officer – Identified and Executive Assistant)
- Organisational Business Support Unit (Administration Officer fixed term to August 2015)
- Infrastructure (NDRRA Traffic Management Officer – fixed term appointment until September 2015).

Currently we have three positions that are in varying stages of the recruitment process for Civil Works and Open Spaces with a focus on encouraging women to apply for non-traditional roles. We are currently waiting on proposals from two Group Training Organisations (GTOs) on options available to Council for two trainees within Civil Works and Open Spaces.

Organisational Training is continuing with May’s training schedule including First Aid and CPR, Chief Warden/Fire Warden and Work safely with liquefied chlorine gas. The Registered Training Organisation (RTO) for our three employees undertaking the Certificate III in Water Operations will be on-site for a two day period for the practical component of the qualification by assessing each employee’s competency within the workplace.

Council’s Corporate Induction is being reviewed to streamline the process to provide new employees with a meaningful introduction into Douglas Shire Council. The outcome of this review will deliver a structured template detailing core guidelines which will emphasise the organisation’s philosophy of operating in a concise, contemporary and compliant manner.

Property Services

Whilst a substantial number of property matters have been resolved there are still 38 outstanding issues being attend to which range from tenure requests on Trustee and freehold land, Native Title and unallocated state land transfers. It is anticipated that a series of reports will be presented for Council's decision at the next Ordinary Council Meeting.

Land asset registers containing Council's Freehold and Trustee land is being quality assured against information provided from Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Council's Asset Register and the property rating database.

Minutes & Agenda Software Implementation

Training was conducted with report writers and approvers on the new Minutes & Agenda Software program in the third week of April 2015. There has been a positive reaction from key stakeholders on the efficiencies the new software will bring to the report writing, tracking, approving and final agenda issuance process. The workflow processes and template(s) structure will be finalised in the last week of April enabling the new software to be implemented for the Ordinary Council Meeting of 26 May 2015.

Records Management

Records Management remains a diverse area within Governance, with the Senior Records Officer being involved in several data integration projects including:

- Dataworks Integration into InfoXpert. This project involves transferring approximately 560,000 of the former Douglas Shire Council records into Council's current Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS).
- Authority integration into InfoXpert. This work involves integrating all documents and templates created with Authority directly in to Councils' electronic data records management system. It is anticipated that testing of this project will commence in June 2015.

Finance and Information Technology

The Queensland Audit Office recently undertook its annual planning visit to Council to review progress in addressing any issues raised at the last audit, review a number of Council's financial processes and discuss the proposed timeline for future audit visits and finalisation of the 2014/15 end of financial year process. As a result, it was agreed that the interim audit will be conducted in the week commencing 25 May 2015 and the final audit in the week commencing 31 August 2015.

The preparation of Council's 2015/16 draft budget is now well underway and at the time of this report two Council workshops have been held to discuss budget indices, fees & charges and rates modelling. The next budget workshop will be used to consider Council's draft capital works program.

The data migration from Council's former records management system (Dataworks) to Council's current system (InfoXpert) is progressing according to plan and the old software will be decommissioned by the end of June.

Library

The "Small Rural and Regional Libraries Professional development program" hosted by State Library of Qld in Brisbane in March was attended by Team Leader, Judy and Library Assistant, Pauline. The program centred on the "Best Start Family Literacy Initiative"; RLQ initiatives and practical ideas for creative community spaces. It was an ideal opportunity to meet and share

stories with fellow library colleagues and State Library staff and to visit Rural Libraries Queensland at Cannon Hill.

Douglas Libraries has received \$12,258 for the “Best Start Family Literacy Initiative”. The criteria for eligible expenditure is strict and does not include existing programs and activities; only additional programs.

“Best Start” is aimed at supporting stronger language and literacy environments for young children 0-5 years and their families. Queensland statistics reflect that approximately 36% of parents of 0-2 year olds and 52% of parents of 3-8 year olds do not regularly read to their children and current evidence suggests that this role is not well understood by parents and caregivers of children aged 0-5 years in Australia. Public Libraries are the only government agency available to children and their families from babyhood, providing year-round free access to resources and services that support language, reading and literacy.

To begin the implementation of the “Best Start” initiative staff are currently attending professional development sessions provided by the State Library of Queensland.

Preparations for implementation of WiFi in the Mossman library are well advanced and this additional service is expected to be rolled out to the public in May. Again Douglas Shire Council would like to acknowledge the support of the State Library of Queensland *Technology Trendsetters Grant* that has enabled Council to implement this very valuable community service. This will provide improved and affordable access to the internet for community members and visitors. The WiFi will be available free to the public during library opening hours.

In March 5,760 people visited their local Library; 96 people joined; 7528 items were borrowed; 22 Inter-library loans were placed and 228 people attended library programs.

“Fairy Poppalina” flittered into the Mossman Library over the Easter School Holidays to cast her “stories gone fun” spell that incited laughter and story memories for 60 children.

OPERATIONS

DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT

Planning Scheme

Targeted informal consultation is in progress seeking essentially technical feedback in relation to the draft Scheme. Closing date for comment is 8 May, 2015.

Planning

A list of planning applications and links to the common material for each application is on the Council website. The new format enables easy access for Councillors and the public.

Planning staff remain very busy with a replacement for the Planning and Compliance Officer, who has commenced maternity leave, not yet in place. Recruiting efforts are continuing.

Appeals

No appeals reported.

REGULATORY SERVICES

Local Laws/Environmental Health/Plumbing

Work has revolved largely around the investigation of incidents including illegal clearing of vegetation and installation of infrastructure including electrical power points on Council controlled foreshore, illegal track clearing on Council land, and illegal dumping of vegetation.

Environmental Health has approved nine new businesses during for April (six food premises, two swimming pools and one accommodation premises). Carnivale applications are being processed.

An investigation was conducted into a diesel spill at Forest Creek. An extensive clean up by the company continues and is being monitored by authorities, including the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection.

A Facebook initiative was launched called "*Things Council's Local Laws Officers would like you to know*", a series of facts put together by the Local Laws Officers to de-bunk some myths regarding local laws and animal management, and generally provide useful educational information for the community. The posts have been well received.

Local Laws officers received 70 formal customer requests for the month and impounded ten dogs and two cats. Seven dogs were returned to owners. Officers investigated six dog attacks with two investigations ongoing.

On line payment facilities for plumbing applications are now being implemented.

Waste

Environment and Heritage Protection staff conducted an audit on 16 April, 2015 comprising both a review of documentation required pursuant to Council's Environmental Authority and onsite operations at Killaloe. No findings from the audit have been issued as yet.

Officers attended a pre-start meeting with the contractor and the participating Council representatives for the commencement of the battery and ferrous metals collection contract which commences on 1 May, 2015.

Work is underway on tender documents relating to the operation of the Killaloe landfill and transfer station (other than the areas the subject of the Bedminster arrangement). The current contract expires on 31 August, 2015.

Execution of the capital works program is continuing, in particular the capping of Phase A of the Killaloe landfill.

Officers attended a workshop in Cairns on 21 April 2015 where a range of solutions for sediment control, capping, retaining walls and the various geotechnical solutions for site works and operations were explored.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Disaster Management

The cyclone season has now ended and staff are looking forward to a pro-active period in making preparations for next year. Staff have recently had on-site meetings in relation to INCSnap Variant, a photo and video reporting tool. A version of the tool is currently used by Queensland Fire and Emergency Services for obtaining rapid intelligence from the field and the current program is looking at producing a variant for use by Council in disaster management and other reporting areas. A presentation will be made to staff in late May on another disaster management program, "Guardian", which will assist in directing and channelling the flow of information during and immediately after a disaster. Consideration is also being given to the installation of a radio network between Council's key infrastructure and work areas as a back-up form of communication. A full disaster exercise, involving all agencies will be planned and held prior to November 2015.

Civil Works

The slasher operators and contractors have been working hard over the past 2 months to keep up with the mowing in the Shire due to seasonal growth.

Road maintenance crews are busy patching gravel potholes in the area and attending to customer requests. The concrete and bridge crews are continuing with capital works projects.

Civil works inspection teams are inspecting all roads in the Shire including inspections of State controlled roads as required by our maintenance contract and reporting back to the Department of Transport and Main Roads. Additionally, during April, all marine infrastructure was inspected.

Capital works projects over the past two months have included footpath renewal in Davidson Street – Port Douglas, extensions to culverts in Ironbark Road and culvert replacement in Nicole Close.



(Above) Grant Street – Port Douglas Footbridge Replacement



(Above) Ironbark road Culvert Extension



(Above) New bollards Port Douglas



(Above) Davidson Street Footpath Renewal

Public and Natural Areas

The Port Douglas Open Spaces team completed capital works projects including installing new bollards and formalising access to Teamsters Park. New bollards were installed at Four Mile Park to restrict vehicles using the park for residential parking and to discourage illegal camping in vehicles.

Market Park also received a much needed revamp, replacing the coppers logs with new 'Replas' bollards. The team has also completed playground soft fall upgrades with new edging installed at both Four mile and Hutching's parks.

This month saw the completion of hardscape works on the Port Douglas roundabout landscaping project. A few minor finishing touches will still occur to satisfy the Department of Transport and Main Roads requirements in the next week. The team also upgraded the aesthetics of the Port Douglas Habitat roundabout by complementing the site with understory plantings and fresh mulch. These improvements have lifted the landscaping standard on the roundabouts into Port Douglas.



Port Douglas roundabout landscape project

All play ground shade sails removed as part of Cyclone Nathan preparations have now been reinstalled. The Mossman team completed capital works projects constructing and installing two new picnic tables at Daintree Village. Staff assisted in Anzac Day preparations and ensured the areas were clean and tidy for the Anzac Day commemorations.

The nursery provided a total of 1,148 native plants for council and community landscaping and revegetation projects. Works continued on the Nautilus Street upgrade project with the planting of 474 plants. Irrigation was also installed to the garden areas of the site, further mulching and planting is still to occur to finish the task.

Pest Management Staff conducted a total of 159 man hours controlling 6.7 hectares of declared weeds across the Shire. The majority of time was spent targeting the high priority species Siam weed. A total of 32 feral pigs have been destroyed this month as part of the Daintree Feral Pig trapping program.

Fleet

Asset Management and maintenance has been the focus for fleet services over the past few months. The mechanics have been kept busy keeping the Council fleet on the road during this period of wet season high maintenance. Over the coming months, Fleet services will be completing a review of maintenance scheduling, reporting and fleet procedures and systems. This review will help identify assets that need to be replaced and serviced.

A new crew cab truck was delivered for use by the Port Douglas Open Spaces team.

Facilities Maintenance

As the financial year draws to a close, many of the smaller capital works projects are reaching completion. Works at the Mossman Depot are planned to begin in early May with the removal of the asbestos in the rear wall of the main shed and the re-sheeting of the wall. An internal dividing wall will be installed between the meeting room and the kitchen which will create a fully enclosed meeting room and separate staff kitchen area.

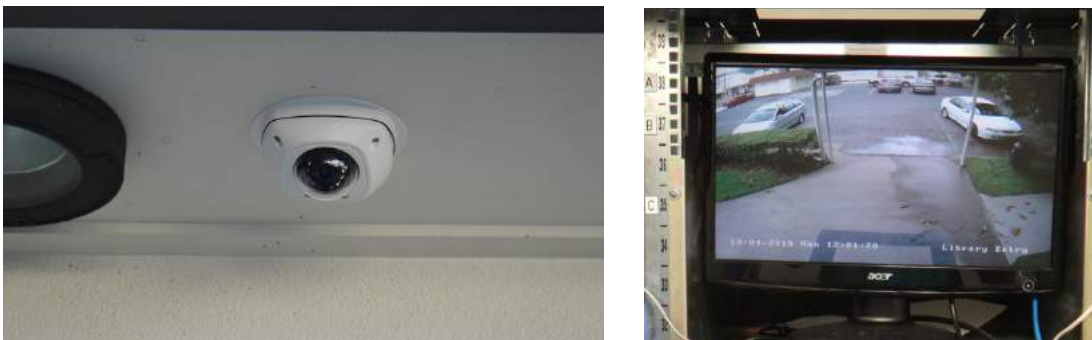
The Mossman Administration Building air-conditioner refurbishment works are scheduled to be complete before the end of May. The new light pole for the Daintree Ferry Boat ramp is also on order along with the construction of an access ladder to improve safety on the site. Timber has been ordered for the repairs to the Sugar Wharf Jetty and should be completed well before the end of the financial year.

Recent works completed include the garden at the front of the Mossman Library which involved removing loose rocks and installing a grassed and concrete area.



(Above) Mossman Library Garden before and after.

New security cameras have been installed at the Mossman Shire Hall and one overlooking the Library car park as a deterrent for vandalism.



(Above) the new security camera overlooking the Mossman Library Car Park.

Works for the month of May include the replacement of the fans in the Mossman Administration Building air-conditioners, removal of the asbestos in the rear wall of the Mossman Depot main shed, replacement of two air conditioners at the Port Waste Water Treatment Plant and installation of drainage at Port Sports Complex.

WATER AND WASTEWATER

Water and Sewer Infrastructure Improvement Projects

Capital projects are progressing well but no major installation was completed during April. The materials for the Mowbray pipeline were ordered and received. The installation of this pipeline will commence in middle May and it is anticipated that 2km of the 5km pipeline will be completed during this financial year.

Contractors also completed the cleaning of the oxidation ditch at the Mossman Waste Water Treatment Plant. An 18% increase in the treatment capacity of the oxidation ditch has been achieved. This will result in an enhanced wastewater product and improve compliance results. The plant operators already report visible and measurable improvements.

Water Supply Regulator

Water and Wastewater was officially informed about the mandatory external audit scheduled for February 2016. In preparation for an external audit, an internal audit was conducted by a certified water auditor. The outcomes of the internal audit were discussed with the operators and proposals were formulated to work towards the full compliance of the newly approved Douglas Water Quality Management Plan. This also included the formulation of proposals for inclusion in the Capital Works Program for 2015/16.

Trade Waste

After analysis of Council's Authority system and associated modules relating to the trade waste register and taking into account legislative requirements, workflow processes for actions and outcomes were implemented in early March 2015. Extensive work has been undertaken to streamline the current trade waste register aspects to improve efficiency, and to reflect the Douglas Shire Council processes being implemented. This work included the development of associated system modules that interface with the register and template development to improve the work flow process.

All aged debtor accounts that were inherited from Cairns Regional Council have been accounted for and only current financial aspects issued by Douglas Shire Council are being administered.

Compliant trade waste discharges will greatly improve Council's maintenance of the sewerage system and improve wastewater plant performance.

Water and Wastewater Compliance

Drinking water is sampled at intakes, reservoirs, treatment plants and in the reticulation network to ensure compliance with the Australian Drinking Water Guideline (ADWG). Water samples were taken in the 4 water supply schemes and tested by a NATA accredited laboratory and the Douglas Water Laboratory for physical, chemical and microbiological parameters. All tested parameters in water samples were compliant with ADW Guidelines during this period. Wastewater compliance samples are taken from bio-solids, final effluent, receiving waters and bores. All parameters tested were compliant with licence conditions.