

SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING 15 MAY 2015	3.3
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ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PORT DOUGLAS 'SPACE PORT'

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RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

- **resolves to establish 'Space Port' and a satellite Customer Service Office, in conjunction with the Library Kiosk, at the Port Douglas Community Hall;**
- **resolves to have the 'Space Port' fees (\$10 per hour or \$40 per day) to be incorporated with the Schedule of Fees and Charges for 2015/16; and**
- **delegates authority to the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer in accordance with Section 257 of the Local Government Act 2009 to finalise all matters associated with delivering this initiative.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

An opportunity has become available to increase Council services within the Port Douglas community by the introduction of 'Space Port' which will provide a quiet office like environment for people to stay connected. It will include desks, a meeting area and an informal area for utilisation of the public.

In conjunction with this initiative, a satellite Customer Service Office will also be opened affording Port Douglas residents to avail of basic front line services without the need to travel to Mossman. In addition a small meeting facility will be available in the office to hold prearranged meetings between staff and members of the public.

The Library Kiosk will continue, although in a different office, and with the move the Library will be able to provide some enhance services but with better amenity to Library members.

BACKGROUND:

Built in 2004, the Port Douglas Community hall has been used for many different activities, commercial and otherwise and some examples are, but not limited to:

- weddings,
- regular fitness classes,
- conferences,
- a TAFE class room
- art classes
- Carnivale office space
- church groups and,
- community meetings or workshops

The library kiosk was established in February 2010 as a 'temporary solution' for a library service to the Port Douglas community when the mobile library was decommissioned. The location is ideal with easy parking, close to the village centre and it is accessible.

COMMENT:

It has become evident that use of the venue has decreased with the small and large meeting room only being used fifteen times since the 1 January 2014.

The development of the initiative 'Space Port' will see innovative use of a Council facility that has the potential to reverse the trend of an under utilised Council facility and increase community use.

The concept involves opening a 'Space Port' to the community, that will include providing a satellite Customer Service Office in the Port Douglas area, relocating the Library Kiosk to a room that is better configured to house the Library Kiosk and providing a quiet environment for people to remain connected.

- **CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRE**

In response to comments and suggestions by community regarding the centralised location of Council's administration has prompted the establishment of a satellite Customer Service Office in Port Douglas. The centre would offer basic customer support allowing for residents to conduct most frontline transactions of Council and to provide opportunity to interact with an officer face-to-face.

Having a satellite Customer Service Office would also allow for Council officers to attend pre-arranged meetings with community members, therefore avoiding the necessity for community members to travel to Mossman. Additionally there will be a "hot desk" available which will allow an officer the capacity to undertake their ordinary duties should they be between appointments in Port Douglas.

- **PORT DOUGLAS - LIBRARY**

The relocation of the Library Kiosk will provide customers and staff with air-conditioned comfort and provide an improvement in the level of service including increased public computers and additional seating providing an improved amenity for users. Another initiative delivered by Library staff this financial year is the introduction of WiFi which will also deliver increased services.

- **SPACE PORT**

The 'Space Port' will provide a quiet office-like environment for people to remain connected. The community hall provides an ideal location as it is in a quiet position while still in close proximity to the village centre.

The rooms will contain desks, meeting table and chairs and an informal area with a sofa and coffee table. There will also be WiFi available, however there will be constraints on downloading content from the internet.

PROPOSAL:

This 'Space Port' type initiative is traditionally found in large cities around the world with differing levels of assistance or services available. There has been a noticeable increase of these types of 'hubs' or 'spaces' in smaller communities.

The establishment of the 'Space Port' is an opportunity:

- to provide a location that is an alternative to the home or motel accommodation,
- to encourage social interaction in a welcoming environment,
- for visiting services, such as job networks, to meet with their clients.,
- to improve education outreach services,
- for not for profit organisations to deliver their services in an alternative location,
- for local Justice of the Peace to provide their services.

Costs associated with utilising the 'Space Port' have been developed after researching similar 'hubs' and the level of assistance and equipment provided. The proposed fees are:

- \$10.00 per hour, or
- \$40 per day.

Consideration will be given to requests from Not for Profit organisations (eg Justice of the Peace) to have use of an allocated space free of charge. Each application lodged will be considered on merit.

CORPORATE/OPERATIONAL PLAN, POLICY REFERENCE:

This report has been prepared in accordance with Goals contained in the Corporate Plan 2014 – 2019:

Goal 2.3.3 Support and explore appropriate commercial use of Council – controlled land, adding to the visitor experience and supporting the local economy.

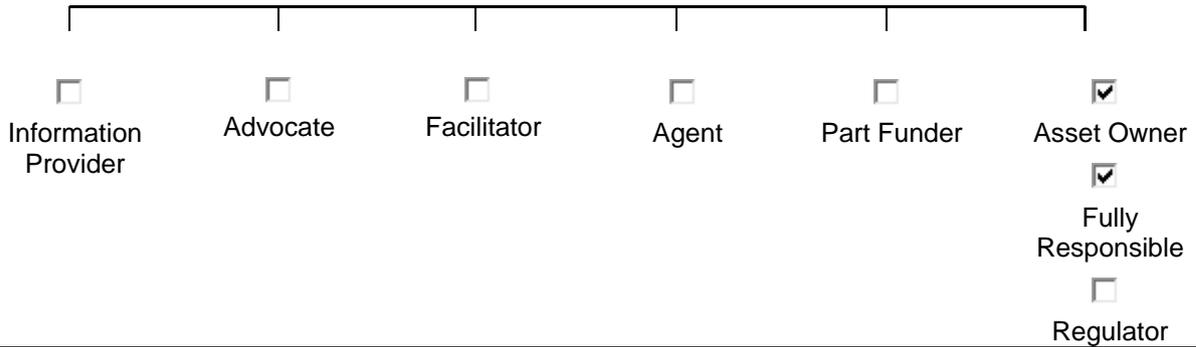
Goal 4.2.2 Provide leadership to secure beneficial social, environmental and economic outcomes for the Shire.

Goal 5.3.3 Develop an organisational culture that embraces new technology and innovative business processes to continually improve performance.

COUNCIL'S ROLE:

Council can play a number of different roles in certain circumstances and it is important to be clear about which role is appropriate for a specific purpose or circumstance. The implementation of actions will be a collective effort and Council's involvement will vary from information only through to full responsibility for delivery.

The following areas outline where Council has a clear responsibility to act:



Asset Owner:	Meeting the responsibilities associated with owning or being the custodian of assets such as infrastructure.
Fully Responsible:	Funding the full cost of a program or activity.

FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

When the Port Douglas Community Hall was constructed the rooms where the Library is to be re-located and Customer Service Office is to be established were not air conditioned. The cost of this work is approximately \$35,000 and in addition it has been determined that for added security it would be beneficial to install security cameras, which would be a further \$6,000.

In total approximately \$41,000 in capital costs is required to reasonably upgrade the Community Hall to facilitate the increased use of these premises. Other costs such as desks, computers etc would be sourced through operational budgets.

During the 2014/2015 financial year there have been project funds not fully spent and/or projects deferred that allow the abovementioned capital costs to be met within the Council approved Capital Works Program. The following table illustrates the funding source for the Community Hall Capital Works:

Project Description	Approved Budget	Funds Utilised	Balance
Air-conditioner Replacement	\$10,000	\$4,247	\$5,753
Library – Garden Replacement/Window Tint	\$10,000	\$3,386	\$6,614
Security Improvement Plan	\$10,000	\$5,657	\$4,343
Community Development Facilities	\$15,000	\$5,040	\$9,960
Design New Fleet Work Shop	\$10,000	\$0	\$10,000
Port Douglas Community Hall Upgrade	\$20,000	\$14,853	\$5,147
Total	\$75,000	\$33,183	\$41,817

The above analysis demonstrates that sufficient unspent funds are held within existing Capital Works budget to progress a higher level of service and innovative use of a Council controlled facility for the Port Douglas Community.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS:

This concept is enhancing Council’s reputation within the community by delivering increased services and ensuring a greater patronage of an under utilised Council asset held for community purposes.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS:

ECONOMIC: Increased traffic at the facility and cross promotion of the venue has the potential to increase usage of the venue including the auditorium and kitchen.

ENVIRONMENTAL: There is opportunity for commuters to develop a flexible working arrangement with employers reducing the need to travel long distances (Cairns, Tablelands) thus lessening the number of vehicles on the road. This in turn has the potential to reduce the level of carbon emissions.

SOCIAL: Making small changes can make a big impact. Creating an environment that is comfortable with modern conveniences such as air-conditioning and WIFI is conducive to accessing services, developing social networks and the development of skills both personally and professionally.

INTERNAL/EXTERNAL CONSULTATION:

The concept of establishing the 'Space Port' has been referred to Council's Development and Assessment staff, who have advised that there are no Town Planning implications associated with this proposal.

The establishment of a satellite Customer Service Office and the 'Space Port' is extending the current community use of the hall and increasing the service capacity of an under utilised Council controlled facility held for community purposes.

The concept was workshopped with Councillors on Tuesday 14 April 2015.

ATTACHMENTS:

Floor plan for proposed Space Port, Library Kiosk and Satellite Customer Service Office.

ATTACHMENT

Current layout



New layout

