

5.06. APPLICATION FOR GET IN THE GAME FUNDING

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DEPARTMENT: Operations

RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolves to submit an application under the current round of the Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing's (DNPSR) Get in the Game Plus infrastructure grants for \$300,000.00 towards the construction of the Island Point Walking Trail in Port Douglas.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to confirm Council's commitment to apply for \$300,000.00 to contribute towards the construction of a walking trail around Island Point, connecting Rex Smeal Park to Four Mile Beach. The proposed trail will have connections to the Lighthouse and Flagstaff Hill Lookout. The grant application is for two thirds of the total cost of the trail. If successful in obtaining the grant, Council will need to finance the remaining costs to complete the project which are estimated at between \$150,000.00 and \$200,000.00.

BACKGROUND

An assessment of local trends data for walking and cycling for the Cairns Regional Council (CRC) Cycle and Walking Strategy, undertaken when Douglas was amalgamated with CRC, found that there is a growing awareness of health benefits related to 'active living' – walking, cycling and running consistently rate as three of the most popular recreational activities for Queenslanders, and rates of walking to work in the Cairns region (including the Douglas Shire) continue to be high.

Port Douglas is generally well equipped with sealed walking paths; however, due to the topography of the area, the paths are typically Class 1, providing easy walking and all ability access in the built areas. Many residents and tourists are seeking more challenging and scenic walks as a form of exercise or active recreation, and this is lacking in the immediate Port Douglas area. Research for the CRC Cycle and Walking Strategy showed that recreational walkers and runners preferred flat to moderate grades with emphasis on support facilities along major routes e.g. drinking water, rest stops, seating and there was a preference for off road paths with good scenic amenity and linked to recreational destinations/settings.

Flagstaff Hill (Island Point) is the only elevated point in Port Douglas. The walking trail around Island Point from Rex Smeal Park to Four Mile Beach will provide a moderate uphill walk with several vantage points to take in the views. The proposed trail will start as a Class 1 path to allow all-abilities access to part of the trail, before progressing up and around the hill as a Class 3 walking trail. The trail will have viewing platforms and seating at sites which offer scenic views, connecting trails to the lighthouse and Flagstaff Hill lookout and water fountains in strategic locations.

Flagstaff Hill and Island Point are close to the beach and the inlet and are the only sites that offer views of Four Mile Beach, Low isles, across to the Daintree rainforest ranges and down to the islands off Cairns. The lookout features on the tour itinerary of the 30 plus cruise ships that visit Port Douglas annually and the 75,000 cruise passengers as well as domestic and international travellers. Currently the lookout is only accessible via a narrow roadway

without any walking paths and there is no link between Four Mile Beach and Rex Smeal (Stinger) Park which is a focal point for events and recreation activities. A walking trail around Island Point will provide additional access to the lookout as well as an opportunity for visitors to engage in exercise or active recreation.

In the past the steps from the southern end of Island Point to Four Mile Beach have been used as part of the course for marathons and triathlons. Creating a challenging path from the top of the steps and into Murphy Street. A link between the beach and around Island Point to Rex Smeal Park will increase its suitability as a running or training course. There are two major triathlons staged in Port Douglas – the international Coral Coast Triathlon and the regional TriPort Triathlon and these events are becoming increasingly difficult to hold due to changes in the requirements for holding events on roads. The Island Point track has the potential to link in with proposed and existing infrastructure to provide off-road circuits of 5km and 12 km in length.

Similarly, boot camps and walking tours are growing in popularity in the area and the new trail can be used to attract more events and training, leading to increased usage of the trail with follow-on benefits to the health of the community and an additional source of economic growth.

COMMENT

World Trail Pty Ltd has been contracted to provide conceptual and final designs for the walking trail in accordance with AS2156.1-2001 Walking Tracks - Classification and signage, and AS2156.2 AS 2156.2—2001 Walking Tracks - Infrastructure design.

The concept design has been completed for some time and work is now underway to complete the final design including dimensions of proposed materials to be used; design and location of elevated structures for installation, crossing designs (e.g. bridges); and, design of any built structures proposed to be incorporated into the trail to enhance the user experience. World Trail is also preparing fully costed construction plans and for-construction drawings including a bill of quantities to allow Council to proceed to an open tender process once funding is secured.

Whilst the final design and costing is still being finalised, Council officers believe there is enough information and design work completed to take the opportunity to apply for the funding and if successful undertake the works as part of the 2016/17 Capital Works program.

PROPOSAL

Local Councils and sporting associations are eligible to apply for funding from the Get in the Game Plus grant fund. Funding is available for infrastructure projects that promote greater participation in sport or active recreation. Projects must be 'shovel ready'.

Get in the Game Plus will fund projects from \$300,000 to \$1.5 million, in the ratio of 2:1, that is the grant can be for up to two thirds of the cost of the project, with the recipient funding the remaining one third of the cost.

The closing date for applications is 29 April 2016, with the announcement of funded projects anticipated in August 2016. Confirmation of Council's support for the grant application and its agreement to a co-contribution of up to \$200,000.00 are required as part of the grant application.

FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

If selected as one of the projects to be funded, Council will then need to enter into an agreement with the State Government to deliver the project. If that occurs, Council's contribution is estimated at between \$150,000.00 and \$200,000.00 in addition to the \$300,000.00 received through the Get in the Game Plus fund.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Council will assume ownership of the trail and will be obligated to maintain it to an acceptable and safe standard. Appropriate signage and design to the current Australian Standards forms part of the project.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic: The walking trail is likely to be a popular attraction with tourists, including cruise passengers, as it will provide scenic views of beaches, valleys and rainforest. This may produce flow on benefits for local food and accommodation businesses and for the establishment or enhancement of walking and fitness businesses. The link between Four Mile beach and the Inlet will also provide an opportunity for the running of existing and additional events in Port Douglas.

Environmental: All work will be carried out in accordance with good land management and construction practices. The trail will allow the public access within the immediate Port Douglas area to a wilderness experience and the ability to appreciate a unique land and sea environment. The trail will also allow access for weed and fire control when necessary, both which have impacted on the area in the past.

Social: The walking trail will encourage active recreation and fitness among residents and visitors to the region. Community use of the trail will provide opportunities to improve community connectedness and wellbeing. The class one section of trail will allow disabled access to a feature area and links to the Flagstaff area and the lighthouse will promote some of the history of Port Douglas.

CORPORATE/OPERATIONAL PLAN, POLICY REFERENCE

This report has been prepared in accordance with the following:

Corporate Plan 2014-2019 Initiatives:

Theme 1 - Celebrating Our Communities

1.1.4 - Support and encourage a healthy, active and capable region through sporting, cultural and recreational opportunities, and community wellbeing initiatives.

1.3.4 - Provide and enhance community facilities and opportunities that cater for the arts, recreational and cultural pursuits.

Port Douglas Waterfront Masterplan 2009

Priority 4 A fine mesh pedestrian and cycle network – improved pedestrian and cycle access to Flagstaff Hill, the sporting precinct and waterfront.

Cycling and Walking Strategy 2010-2030 (CRC)

Strategic directions:

- *Create a more bicycle and pedestrian Region for residents and visitors*
- *Incorporate active recreation and healthy living principles into infrastructure planning and delivery*
- *Be accessible for all abilities*
- *Address the growing interest in major walking and cycling routes which showcase the Region's tropical character, natural attractions and tourist appeal.*

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.
Part-Funder	Sharing the cost of a program or activity with other organisations.

CONSULTATION

Internal: Infrastructure Services Branch has been consulted on some of the proposed structural designs.

External: Consultation has occurred with the Port Douglas community through a community meeting and via Council's website and Facebook. Feedback has been overwhelmingly in support of the proposal. The proposal has also been through a Native Title process and discussed with officers from the Department of natural Resources and Mines.

Others consulted include Tourism Port Douglas Daintree and the Douglas Shire Chamber of Commerce.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Flagstaff Hill Proposal Walking Trail Concept Design – Version 2

