

5.2. BUILDING BETTER REGIONS FUND ROUND 6 CO CONTRIBUTION

REPORT AUTHOR Lisa Golding, Manager People and Community Services

MANAGER Juanita Warner, Acting Chief Executive Officer

DEPARTMENT People and Community Services

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Endorses applications to Building Better Regions Fund Round Six for:

a) Rex Smeal Playground Renewal/Upgrade; and

b) Cooya Beach Reservoir Connection

2. Commits a 25% contribution in the 2022-23 Budget towards eligible project costs for each project, if successful; and

3. Delegates authority to the Chief Executive Officer under Section 257 of the *Local Government Act 2009* to administer all matters in relation to the above.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Australian Government's Building Better Regions Fund (BBRF) aims to create jobs, drive economic growth and build stronger regional communities into the future with grants of \$20,000 to \$10M to cover 50% or more of eligible project costs.

Incorporated not-for-profit, local government agencies or body or non-distributing co-operatives are eligible to apply.

Council has an opportunity to apply for funding for investment ready projects aligning with the funding program.

This report seeks Council's endorsement of projects, as well as a commitment to contribute cash towards each project if successful.

Applications close 10 February 2022.

BACKGROUND

The Australian Government announced \$250 million in the 2021-22 Budget for a sixth round of the BBRF. There are two grant streams - Infrastructure Projects and community investments projects.

The Infrastructure Projects Stream funds construction of new infrastructure, or the upgrade or extension of existing infrastructure, that provide economic and social benefits to regional and remote areas.

The Community Investments Stream funds community development activities including, but not limited to, new or expanded local events, strategic regional plans, leadership and capability building activities.

Council officers reviewed Council's Ten-Year Capital Works program and shortlisted projects aligning with the Infrastructure Stream. While there were additional projects aligning with the objectives of this program, projects were not considered investment ready, where construction would be able to commence within 12 weeks of executing a funding agreement; or Council did not have the resources available to fund the level of co-contribution required.

Investment ready projects require:

- authority of the land or infrastructure owner to undertake the project at the nominated site(s).
- Confirmed funding contributions from all sources, supported by formal documentation.
- All required regulatory and or development approvals.
- Finalised project designs and costings.

COMMENTS

Eligibility requirements require evidence of how applicants will provide their share of project costs. Applicants making a cash contribution must submit an Accountant Declaration Form with the application.

As funds have not been budgeted, Council approval is sought to satisfy the additional eligibility requirement.

Under the Guidelines, grant funding will be up to either 50% or 75% of eligible project costs, depending on the project's location. Based on each project's latitude and longitude, the remoteness classification for all projects is Outer Regional Australia, requiring a contribution of \$1 for every \$1 requested unless seeking a co-funding exemption under exceptional circumstances.

On the basis that the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on Council's financial and staff resources since March 2020, and the broader and local economy, which is heavily reliant on international and domestic tourism, a partial exemption will be sought.

PROPOSAL

The proposal is for Council to:

1. Endorse applications to Building Better Regions Fund Round Six for:

- a) Rex Smeal Park Playground Renewal/Upgrade; and
- b) Cooya Beach Reservoir Connection Project

2. Commit a 25% contribution in the 2022-23 Budget towards eligible project costs for each project, if successful; and

3. Delegate authority to the Chief Executive Officer under Section 257 of the *Local Government Act 2009* to administer all matters in relation to the above.

FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The total project costs for each project is estimated to be as follows:

- Rex Smeal Park Playground Renewal/Upgrade \$1.4m (GST excl)
- Cooya Beach Reservoir Connection \$1.5M (GST excl)

The opportunity to secure grant funding for the projects, with minimal contributions from Council (25%) will reduce the financial impost on ratepayers while creating economic and social benefits for residents, businesses and visitors of the Shire.

If projects are successful, funding contributions would need to be allocated to the 2022-23 financial year. Projects must be completed before 31 December 2024.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Should the projects be successfully funded, project risks will be mitigated through the systematic application of internal project management systems. Project management will be the responsibility of Project Officers, supported by Officers from finance, procurement and corporate services and community engagement. The Project Managers will be responsible for ensuring all conditions of the funding agreement are met.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic: The funding program aims to create jobs, drive economic growth and build stronger regional communities. Projects may also provide opportunities for Indigenous employment.

The renewal/upgrade to Rex Smeal Park Playground represents a considerable investment in Public and Open Spaces. It is anticipated that this iconic project will be a drawcard for local and visiting families, encouraging people to stay and play longer in Port Douglas. Council has engaged a Cairns based Landscape Architect to develop the Concept and Detailed Designs for the Rex Smeal Adventure Playground. The construction contract will be publicly tendered, in an effort to attract competitive quotes and provide local contractors an opportunity to tender.

Environmental: Cooya Reservoir Connection project will facilitate water security for the Cooya Beach residential area.

The Green Ant themed Rex Smeal adventure playground is symbolic and seeks to encourage interest, exploration and connection with the environment. The structure has been designed in close consultation with a Licensed Arborist to ensure the design does not impact on the health of the iconic Fig Tree. The construction methodology will also include environmental specifications, including for example requirement to hand dig certain footings to avoid damage to tree roots.

Social: The renewal/upgrade to Rex Smeal Park Playground will activate and reinvigorate the popular park, increasing family visitors, providing another safe environment for social activities in the outdoors.

Rex Smeal Park is a unique space that should not be simply defined by a large scale "off the shelf" play structure that could be found anywhere else. The design is unique and considers all members of the community and wherever possible provides opportunities for inclusion. The proposed playground will be as easily enjoyed by adults wandering through as by children.

The proposed playground will encourage a sense of community spirit amongst children from a young age and also allows parents to connect and engage with each other.

CORPORATE/OPERATIONAL PLAN, POLICY REFERENCE

This report has been prepared in accordance with the following:

Corporate Plan 2019-2024 Initiatives:

Theme 1 - Celebrating Our Communities

Douglas Shire Council embraces the diversity of our communities and values the contribution that all people make to the Shire. We recognise that it is a core strength of the region. We acknowledge our past so that it may guide us in the future. We recognise the wrongs done to our Indigenous community and we actively seek to reconcile so that we may all benefit from and enjoy our Shire. We acknowledge early European settlers who forged an agricultural base for our economy and we welcome all new arrivals as part of our broader community.

Goal 1 - We will celebrate the diversity of our community and ensure that all infrastructure, programs, and services are underpinned with inclusiveness and accessibility.

Goal 2 - We will deliver programs and services that protect and enhance the liveability of our beautiful Shire.

Goal 3 - We will develop programs that promote health, well-being and safety in the community.

Theme 2 - Fostering Sustainable Economic Growth

A robust economy is at the heart of a thriving community and enables investment in environmental protection. While our remoteness is a key attribute, it also presents challenges for attracting new business and investment. We must also meet the challenges of fierce competition in the tourism sector. Council will partner with industry to build, diversify and promote the Douglas economy. Council will design and deliver infrastructure, strategies and services that support the local economy and businesses.

Goal 1 - We will build appropriate infrastructure and deliver services that connect and support businesses.

Theme 3 - Leading Environmental Stewardship

Our visitors and residents deeply value the unparalleled environment in which we live. We recognise our responsibility in protecting and preserving our natural world for generations to come. We understand the strong link between the environment and the economy: they are interdependent.

Douglas Shire will be at the forefront of environmental protection by developing strategies, setting policies, and working with all stakeholders to become the envy of and to inspire locations across Australia and the World.

Goal 3 - We will continue to build water infrastructure so that the Douglas Shire may enjoy water security and water quality.

Operational Plan 2021-2022 Actions:

3.3.1 - Progress future water security infrastructure solution for secure water supply over the dry season to alleviate current and future water shortages. Perform feasibility analysis on all current proposed water security solutions including the alternate intake and bulk raw water storage solutions to determine the most viable option that provides the best outcome for capital investment and water security then progress towards shovel ready stage.

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:

Advocate	Council makes representation on behalf of the community on important issues, funding opportunities, projects and programs. Council will use its influence to seek the best outcomes for the community.
Builder/Owner	Council makes a significant investment every year in the infrastructure that underpins the Shire through its capital works program. Council will manage its assets with appropriate frameworks and deliver its projects through robust project management.
Custodian	Council owns and manages infrastructure, facilities, reserves, resources and natural areas. In fulfilling its role as custodian, Council will be mindful of the community, the economy, the environment, and good governance.
Service Provider	Council provides many services to the community from roads and waste services to libraries and recreational facilities. Services evolve over time and it is the Council's mission to ensure that these services are appropriate, delivered efficiently, and designed with the customer at the centre.

CONSULTATION

Internal: Management Team, Councillors, Property Officer, Events Officer, Grants Officer, Community Liaison Officer, Project Engineer, Project Manager – Open Spaces, Coordinator Civil Operations, Project Office.

External: Regional Development Australia Far North Queensland, Economic consultant.
Rex Smeal Park Playground: Open Public Consultation, Event Companies, Port Douglas State School.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Rex Smeal Park Playground

The Concept Plan for the playground was published on the 6 August 2021, with feedback requested by 27 August 2021. Community engagement initiatives included:

- Major Projects update on Council's Website.
- Alert on Council's Website– Have your Say.
- Two Facebook Posts.
- Note in E-Newsletter on 6 August 2021.
- Video Noticeboards in Library and other Public areas.
- Playground Information Kit delivered to Mossman Library, state schools and kindergartens throughout the shire.
- Onsite meeting with key Event Planning Companies.
- Presentation to Years 3 and 4 Classes at Port Douglas State School.

Cooya Reservoir

Cooya Beach Reservoir is subject to an infrastructure requirement as part of the Stage 6 subdivision development. In addition to the stage 6 planning requirements the project will also improve council's firefighting flow demands. All projects will inform the community prior to works being carried out, as well as during and after the projects are completed.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Rex Smeal Greenant (1)- Final Concept [5.2.1 - 9 pages]

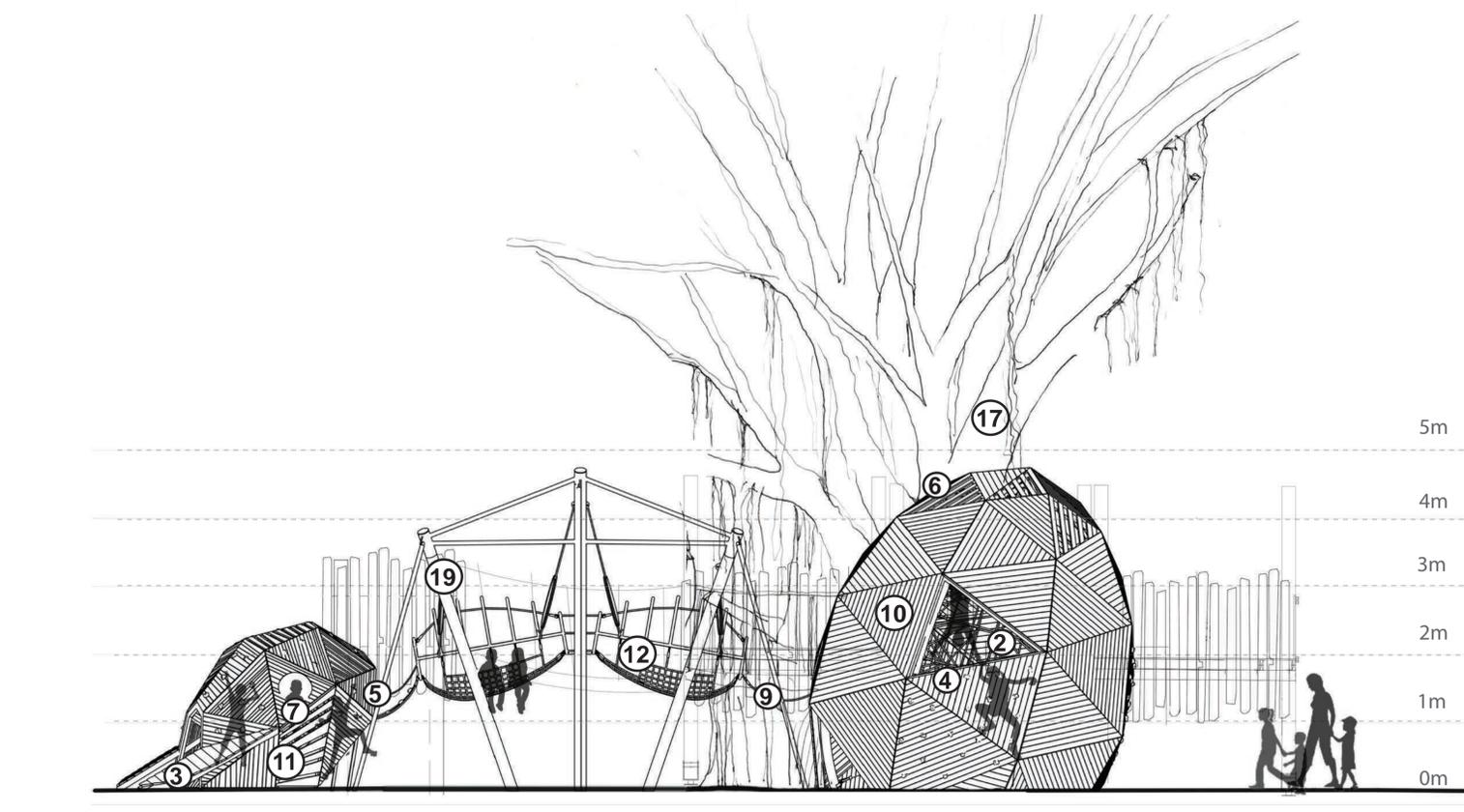
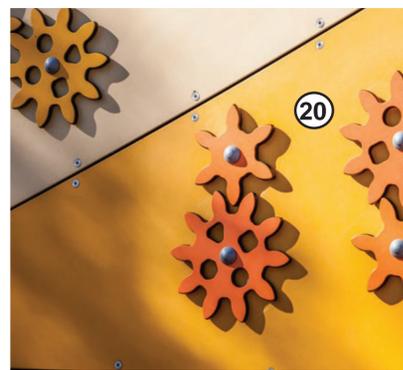
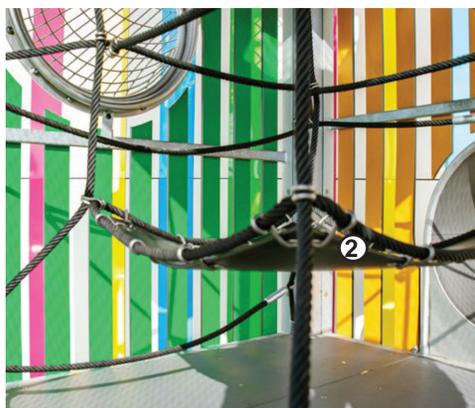
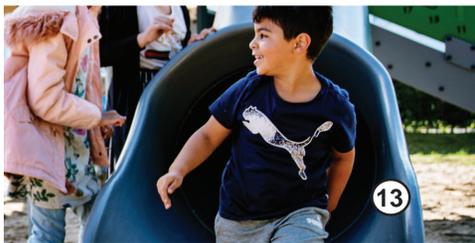
LEGEND

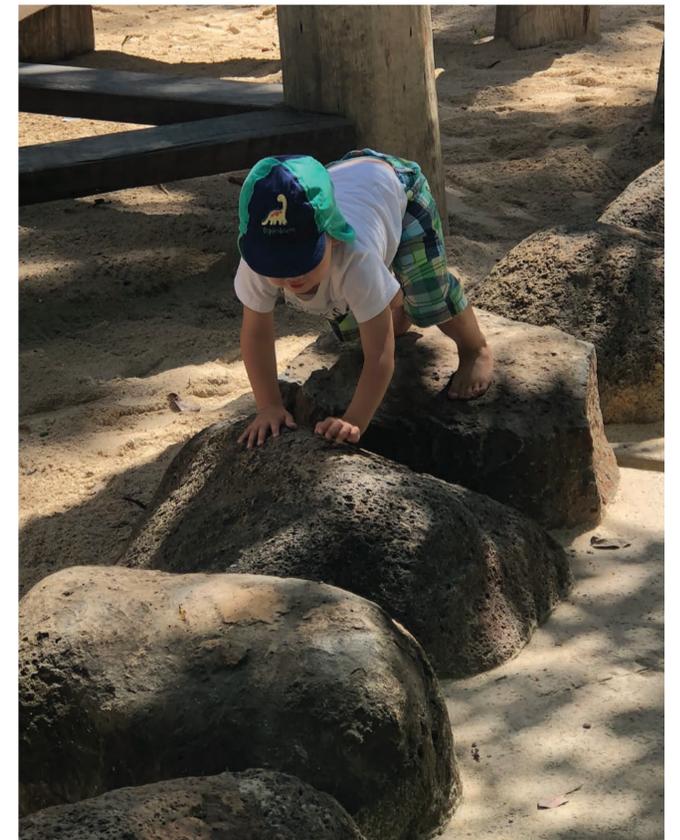
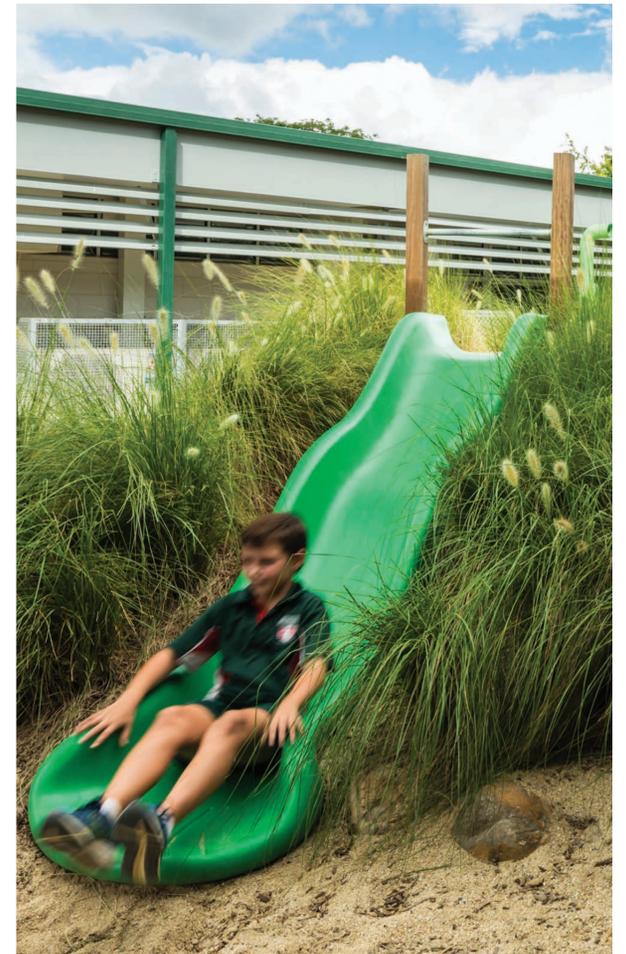
- ① Green Ants Nest
- ② Cultural themed rubber softfall
- ③ Mound planted with native grasses
- ④ Embankment slide
- ⑤ Hardwood steps
- ⑥ Rock climb
- ⑦ Rope bridge
- ⑧ Timber deck platform
- ⑨ Green Ant
- ⑩ Nest lookout
- ⑪ Timber Steps
- ⑫ Tubular slide
- ⑬ Timber stage
- ⑭ Inground trampoline
- ⑮ Timber steppers
- ⑯ Timber logs
- ⑰ Enchanted forest
- ⑱ Stone paving
- ⑲ Cantilevered swing
- ⑳ Themed rockers
- ㉑ Existign Fig Tree
- ㉒ Concrete seating wall
- ㉓ Heritage steps
- ㉔ Concrete Path



LEGEND

- ① Crawl Access
- ② Internal Rope Play
- ③ Climbing Blade
- ④ Climbing Mid Level Access
- ⑤ Climbing Wall
- ⑥ Skylight Segment
- ⑦ Viewing Bubble
- ⑧ Lookout Nest
- ⑨ Membrane Bridge
- ⑩ Coloured Robinia timber
- ⑪ Climbing Ladder
- ⑫ Scaled Net Cocoons
- ⑬ Tunnel slide
- ⑭ Rope entry
- ⑮ Ant sculptures fixed to nest roofs
- ⑯ Coconut rope bridge to decking
- ⑰ Fig tree
- ⑱ Decking platforms
- ⑲ Powdercoated steel frame
- ⑳ Internal play









REX SMEAL PARK ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND
Visualisation Rev 2 _ 21/12/2021

Scale 1:300 @ A3









