

ORDINARY MEETING 18 NOVEMBER 2014	5.6
------------------------------------------	-----

REPORT FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Linda Cardew: Chief Executive Officer

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 October and November 2014.

BACKGROUND:

At every second Council meeting an overview of Council's operations is provided by the Chief Executive Officer. 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.

There is an open invitation to the community to provide feedback, at any time, on any aspect of Council's service delivery. 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

Community Partners

The CEO Unit has been involved with a wide range of community events and activities which has resulted in the strengthening of networks and partnerships.

This has resulted in an officer of the CEO Unit being nominated by Reconciliation Queensland to attend a national Reconciliation event in Adelaide on November 19. It is an honour to have an officer's initiative and dedication recognised at such an event.

October 26 saw the 20th anniversary of the Crocodile Trophy mountain bike stage race finish along Four Mile Beach in Port Douglas. This was the first time this international event finished in Port Douglas and our Shire was at its best. The media coverage of the event was seen throughout the world with daily segments on European television. SBS will be showing the race on 23 November 2014.

Council also provided support to the Great Barrier Reef Marathon Festival held on 9 November. There were approximately 1300 participants in the various events throughout the day.

Reports to Council by the CEO Unit have seen Council resolving to enter into funding arrangements for Carnivale and the New Year's Eve Fireworks.

In collaboration with the State, officers from the CEO Unit organised five 'Get Ready Douglas' community forums for disaster preparedness that took place from 27 October to 31 October 2014. These were held in Alexandra Bay, Daintree Village, Wonga Beach, Port Douglas and Mossman. Officers also travelled to China Camp and Wujal Wujal to meet with residents and discuss 'Get Ready' plans. The forums were an opportunity for communities throughout the Shire to meet with officers from Emergency Services, Council, the SES and the Fire Brigade.

Officers also presented to the year five class at the Port Douglas State School, and plan to present to the Alexandra Bay year five class in the coming weeks.

Council also launched the Extreme Weather Event photographic competition and Exhibition. The Exhibition will take place in the Mossman Administration Building foyer from Monday 17 November for a period of two to three weeks.

The Call for Artists for the Skate Park Street Art project for graffiti prevention was launched on 21 October. Council gratefully acknowledges funding for this project from Suncorp Insurance and the Queensland Police Service under the Safer Queensland Community Grant program.

The public call for artists interested in running the workshops has resulted in excellent feedback from the artists that have submitted proposals, the Wonga Beach school students and the Mossman Youth Centre who will assist to further the workshops.

The CEO Unit had the honour of assisting the Mossman RSL to host the Remembrance Day service on 11 November at Council's Mossman Administration Building. The Mossman State High School band catering class were also involved.

Community Participation

CEO Unit officers have been involved in a range of initiatives and networks in the Shire:

- The Mayor's Christmas Appeal is currently open with applications closing on 1 December. Agencies promote the Appeal to ensure those that require assistance submit an application.
- Attendance at the CAN meeting, the Liquor Accord, Youth Network, Public Safety, Indigenous Inter Agency, Dive into Digital Workshop, Regional Community Resilience meetings.

In collaboration with Tourism Port Douglas Daintree, the Douglas Card was developed and launched in preparation for 1 November. The Douglas card is available to residents outside of the Douglas Shire for free ferry passage from the 1 November to 28 February. Businesses north of the Daintree River participate by offering discounts to card holders.

The Daintree Gateway signage project has seen the interpretative signage reviewed and updated and a call for Yalanji artists go out on 3 November. This project is a great opportunity to recognise the culture of our Traditional Owners and promote the Daintree experience. Council gratefully acknowledges funding from the Department of Local Government for this project.

CEO Unit officers will be supported the delivery of an Indigenous Student Forum conducted with Mossman High students on 13 October. A Parent Forum will be held 19 November to present information and statistics on student attendance at school. The aim is to encourage parents to be more actively involved in their children's education and the school community environment.

Funding

The Grant Funding Workbook and Calendar has had a major overhaul and now includes extra resources to assist community with researching and writing grants.

Officers have identified a number of funding opportunities for community activities and promoted these opportunities to local not-for-profit and sporting organisations. Officers have assisted a number of organisations to develop funding applications and provided letters of support.

Council's Regional Arts Development Fund opened on 1 October with an information session held 16 October. RADF closes on 1 December.

Website and Facebook

Council's website 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. Officers have added information regarding Community & Farmers Markets along with Things to Do. These are great new features for visitors and locals to access and plan their time in the Shire.

CEO Unit officers have also developed and updated new website content for Libraries.

Council's Facebook page is a very popular way of getting messages out to our communities. Council has posted 46 items since October 12, which have reached over 25,000 users, with each post reaching an average of 558 users.

CORPORATE SERVICES

Governance

Work has continued on the Annual Report with Governance providing the legislative content for the report. The report is now in the final stages for Council consideration. The successful completion of this project has relied on a joint effort from the Finance, CEO Unit & Governance sections of Council. Whilst this document is a legislative requirement it also shows the journey Council has taken in its first six months of business.

The Audit Committee met again on October 21 to review the Final Audit Report from the Queensland Audit Office. This meeting ensured that Council complies with its legislative requirements around the Financial Statements. The Audit Committee received very positive feedback from both the Internal and External auditors and also recognised the efforts of the staff to achieve an unqualified audit.

There have been many property issues dealt with in the last six weeks. Two issues that fall within the Property/Governance area are the Lease of the Tropic Breeze Caravan Park and the appointment of the Caravan Park Caretakers for Wonga Beach Caravan Park. The final evaluation of the Tropic Breeze has been completed and will be considered by Council during the closed session of this Council Meeting (due to the contractual nature of the matter). Officers would also like to welcome Bob & Joyce Hando as the new Wonga Beach Caravan Park Caretakers. Bob & Joyce come with a long history of managing caravan parks, and are FNQ locals. Council officers thank Cecilia Pinkstone for her long standing service to Council and the visitors to the park.

The Workplace Health & Safety Committee met on 6 November 2014. This meeting was very productive with many safety and well-being initiatives discussed. Council has recently won the LGAQ Encouragement Award for Wellbeing for its FitBit challenge. This challenge was rolled out to depot and outdoor staff to encourage health and wellbeing. It has been enthusiastically received by staff and the award of \$5000 from LGAQ will allow Council to consider further programs of this nature.

There are many diverse projects underway in the Governance area. Two of the current projects include the refinement of the Corporate Induction for new staff, including a refresher for existing staff and the introduction of a new Agenda/Minutes process and software program.

Finance and Information Technology

On 27 September the Queensland Audit Office (QAO) completed its audit and certification of Council's General Purpose Financial Statements for the period 1 January to 30 June 2014 and issued an unmodified (unqualified) Independent Auditor's Report. This means that Council has met its statutory obligation to have the audit finalised within four months of the end of the financial year. A copy of this documentation is included in the Annual Report. Douglas Shire Council was also the first of the de-amalgamated Councils to complete the audit process.

Also included in the Annual Report is the Community Financial report which provides a summary of the financial statements with the aim of providing understandable information to the members of our community. Staff are also in the process of completing the 2013/14 Consolidated Data Collection for the Queensland Local Government Grants Commission.

On 3 November Council issued water usage notices covering the period from mid June 2014 to mid-October 2014. These notices have a due date for payment of 4 December 2014. Supplementary rate notices were also issued on 7 November for new properties and for amendments to properties as a result of valuation changes and adjustments to utility charges since the last full rate notice issue.

As part of Council's debt recovery program, the Rates Section has also made arrangements for the issue of letters of demand (via Council's solicitors) to ratepayers with amounts owing in excess of \$1000, who have not responded to repeated requests to attend to their outstanding rates and utility charges. Ratepayers will have 21 days to respond to the payment request.

A functionality upgrade for Council's electronic records management system was undertaken on 24 October 2014. Quotations have also been obtained for the Reynolds Room (Council Chambers) audio upgrade, which includes the projector, screen and a wireless microphone system. It is anticipated that the upgrade will be undertaken before Christmas.

Library

In October 7,570 people visited the Mossman and/or Port Douglas Libraries borrowing 7664 items. This included 55 new members.

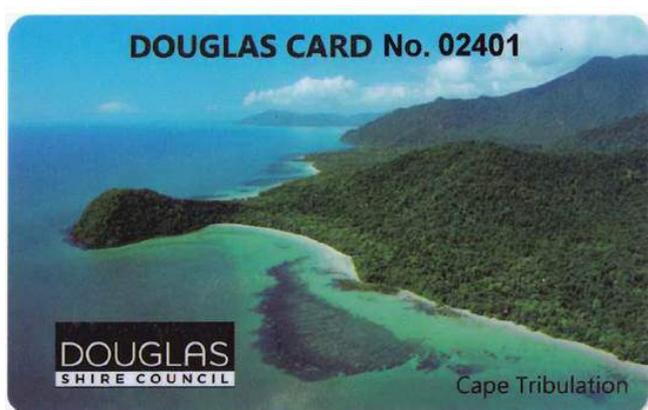
During the month of October Mossman Library hosted school holiday activities; author Rosalind Brenner; weekly computer classes; weekly Storytime and Baby Rhyme Time sessions, and the "Gone Girls" movie ticket promotion for adults. A total of 368 people attended or participated in these activities.

Gemma Deavin of ABC Open Learning is currently conducting 3 workshops at Mossman Library on "Getting to know your digital camera" and "The art of writing and blogging".

Planning is currently underway for a new library program – *Lego and K'nex for Young Builders*. This activity is aimed at children from 7-15 years and will be held every Thursday at Mossman Library from 3.30 to 4.30pm. It is hoped it will be an enjoyable, open-ended creative activity that encourages problem-solving and hands-on engineering while stimulating conversation with their peers.

Organisation Business Support Unit

The Douglas Card initiative commenced on 1 November and to date there have been approximately 350 cards issued to approved applicants. All approved applicants receiving their cards will also receive a promotional brochure developed by Tourism Port Douglas and Daintree in conjunction with participating businesses north of the Daintree River. In addition packs including application form, brochure and accompanying news letter have been issued to the Daintree River Ferry staff to provide to anybody who may present an old "Smart Card". An example of the new Douglas card appears below.



OPERATIONS

Development and Environment Update

Planning Scheme/LGIP

A GIS mapping consultant has been appointed and is working closely with the town planning consultant to prepare a suite of draft zoning and other planning scheme maps. Councillor workshops have been deferred while this work is undertaken. Council's 2014/15 Operational Plan schedules the new Draft Planning Scheme to be referred for its first State interest check by 30 June 2015.

As a result of recent legislative amendments Council must prepare a Local Government Infrastructure Plan (LGIP) which will replace the requirement for a Priority Infrastructure Plan (PIP). The LGIP is best completed in parallel with the development of the new Planning Scheme.

A draft PIP was prepared in 2010 and work is now underway to scope and cost the LGIP project.

The LGIP process will include:

- review and update of the draft PIP to create LGIP which aligns with legislative and new Planning Scheme requirements;
- review and update of Councils infrastructure network planning and schedules of work;
- financial sustainability assessment to demonstrate the extent to which the LGIP aligns with Councils asset management plan and long term financial forecast;

- two external compliance checks; and
- preparation and adoption of new infrastructure charges resolution including calculation methodology.

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.

The new planning and compliance officer commenced with Council on 29 September 2014.

Planning Appeals

Preparation for the hearing of the Appeals with respect to 36 Murphy St and 27 Murphy St, Port Douglas is continuing in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Environment Court. The Appeals will be heard in late November / early December 2014.

The appeal lodged by the developer of the new Exemplar coach depot settled following mediation.

Regulatory Services

Local Laws/Environmental Health/Plumbing

Regulatory services officers continue to respond to a large number of issues including in relation to animal management, signage, building sites, noise and camping.

Waste

The quarterly report to the Department Environmental Heritage and Protection was lodged as required by the Transitional Environmental Plan (TEP) in force in relation the Killaloe landfill. Officers are continuing with efforts to cap cell A and prepare a Leachate Management Plan as required under the TEP.

Council is participating in a regional tender conducted by FNQROC relating to ferrous metals and battery collection. Tenders will be assessed shortly.

Water and Wastewater

Statewide Water Information Management (SWIM)

Douglas Shire Council has submitted the first SWIM report in November after considerable team efforts to provide and submit data. Annually Service Providers must collate significant volumes of data on water and sewerage services to numerous State and Commonwealth agencies. The Statewide Water Information Management (SWIM) project was created in 2006 to simplify reporting of up to 900 plus indicators reported by Queensland Service Providers. Currently, attributed to the SWIM program, the SWIM online portal and data translation tools, require the reporting of only around 200 indicators which are then passed on to State and Commonwealth agencies in specified formats. This year the SWIM report also included the new KPI framework from the Department of Energy and Water Supply.

Sewer Infrastructure

The sewer relining project has progressed well during the dry season and all camera investigations were completed. During October repair works were undertaken and completed in preparation for relining activities. Relining of the sewer network in Sorrento Crescent and Seabrook Avenue (Port Douglas) as well as in Pringle Street, Alchera Drive and Johnston Road (Mossman) are now completed. Work will continue this month in Solander Boulevard and Wharf Street (Port Douglas).

Rex Creek water intake upgrade

Work is continuing with the installation of the stainless steel lining in the intake race which is now in its final stages with an estimated completion date of mid-December. There has been a significant improvement in water flow across the intake screens since the installation of portions of the new lining and this is expected to improve even more when all lining inserts are installed permanently and the concreting and grouting are completed. The Water Quality and Reticulation teams deserve recognition for their tireless efforts to restore satisfactory levels of treated water in reservoirs after each water intake shutdown during the installation of the lining.

Douglas Shire Water Laboratory

Microbiological parameters are tested one week by a NATA accredited Laboratory and three weeks by Douglas Shire (Colilert-18) Water laboratory. Colilert-18 has become the new International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) standard 9308-2:2012 and detects a single viable coliform and *E.coli* per sample.

Proficiency testing started in August in the Douglas Water laboratory and 60 samples were analysed and compared with results obtained from the NATA laboratory. Proficiency testing was completed by 30 September. The Douglas Water lab has now successfully completed 5 weeks of regulatory analyses. Proficiency testing will be monthly and ongoing to ensure a functional and proficient water laboratory.

Since 1 November all NATA accredited analytical testing are performed by SGS laboratories situated in Cairns. This decision was taken after a long process of evaluating proposals from Cairns Regional Council, Townsville City Council and SGS Laboratories to provide NATA accredited laboratory services. The SGS option will result in significant annual savings for Douglas Shire. During the transitional stages monitoring schedules were created, refined and checked against licence conditions whilst logistical aspects were addressed to allow for the taking, transporting and analyses of a possible 2310 statutory samples annually. During November and December historic data from 1 July onwards will be transferred to the new SGS/DSC Database and output will be customised to assist water, waste and wastewater teams with statutory reporting.

Liquid Trade Waste

Liquid waste generated by industry, small business and commercial enterprises is referred to as

Trade Waste

All trade waste discharges to sewer infrastructure are required to meet Council's sewer admission limits according to the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act*. Douglas Shire Council currently manages 144 Trade Waste customers representing 27 business types. Trade Waste customers are divided in three categories based on discharge quality and volume for the purposes of a trade waste approval and charging.

Water and Wastewater is currently in the process of reviewing permit conditions to ensure trade waste producers are well informed of their obligations when discharging into Council infrastructure. The monitoring of the trade waste producers is also a high priority and a Trade Waste Officer was employed earlier this year to complement the existing Trade Waste Management system.

During October and November there have been two changes of ownership for businesses resulting in new applications for permits. Monthly accounts are now issued on time and 18 trade waste customers received letters for settling outstanding permit fees. Trade waste inspections are progressing well. The Central Hotel in Port Douglas, one of the larger trade waste producers in the Shire has set an excellent example during a recent facility upgrade by reducing their impact of greasy waste on Council infrastructure.

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.

Infrastructure

Civil Works

Staff have targeted specific NDRRA works to ensure completion prior to any meaningful rainfall. Leven's Gully in China Camp and Connolly causeway in Mowbray have both been restored. Connolly causeway is now being upgraded to a concrete causeway as part of flood mitigation works, with completion due in November. Designs are now being finalised for Whyanbeel, Mowbray River Road and Degarra causeway upgrades. Repairs to Warners Bridge have been completed as a joint arrangement between the Mossman Mill and Council.

Maintenance grading has been completed south of the Daintree River with the exception of Upper Daintree. Grading is now occurring on the China Camp Road and on the roads north of the Daintree River. Tender evaluations have been completed for restoration of the northern half of the Bloomfield Track under the NDRRA process. Construction of the Woobadda Bridge continues to progress with the approaches expected to be completed in late November and the bridge ready to be opened in December 2014.

The consulting engineering firm GHD has commenced working in the Shire and is currently evaluating road damage and planning restoration delivery packages. Up to six (6) staff will be provided with office accommodation in Council's Depot over the next 18 months with design and contract letting programmed for this wet season, so that work can commence as soon as the approaching wet season concludes.

Disaster Management

The Mayor and Council's senior staff recently attended a desk top exercise in Cairns conducted by Qld Police. The General Manager Operations also attended the annual "Get Ready" and weather forecast for the cyclone season. A number of Council and agency staff recently attended a training day at the Storm Tide Cyclone Shelter in Port Douglas. New generators have been installed at selected pump stations and another is currently being installed at the Depot to further enhance Council's operational resilience in disaster situations. A variety of staff training is being offered to ensure each staff member has a second skill to assist in disaster management.

A flood study for the Daintree Village area and down to Barratts Creek has recently been completed and will be uploaded to the State Government's online Floodcheck site in mid-December.

Public and Natural Areas

After a three year wait the playground at Cape Tribulation has been erected and is being used by the local children.

Staff have spent 665 man hours treating Hiptage in the Mossman Gorge. These works followed on from a recent aerial survey and involved a joint operation between Douglas, QPWS and Jabalbina.

Mossman Rugby League grounds have been top dressed and the grass condition on both ovals has improved considerably.

Seven pigs have been destroyed in the past month through the Council pig trapping program.

An engineering report on proposed measures to address the erosion of the foreshore at Newell Beach has been completed.

Facilities Maintenance

The installation of solar panels has been completed and power generation in October was 4.89 MWh (Mega Watt hours) at the Mossman Administration building (year to date 10.8MWh). The Carbon offset was 3.38 tons or the equivalent of 87 trees.

National Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) program

Submission claims for emergent works and the restoration of essential public assets (REPA) works totalling \$15,752,924 have now been lodged with the Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA). As at this week QRA has approved both emergent repairs and restoration works to a total of \$11,519,971. Some of the submissions lodged remain to be assessed by QRA and further minor claims are to still to be compiled and submitted by Council.

Council can now make a start on many of the works that have been delayed while waiting for these approvals. Until recently the northern areas of the Shire (eg Creb Track, Zig Zag, China Camp (Buru) were inaccessible. The engineering consultancy AECOM has undertaken the damage assessment and a further claim for the restoration of roads and infrastructure in that area was lodged with QRA this week (included in the above). We have now exceeded our original estimate of \$15 million in declared disaster repair works for 2014.

A tender for contractor services for the restoration of part of the Bloomfield Track was conducted over the past few weeks. A tender evaluation report will be presented to Council at the Closed Session at its Ordinary Meeting on 18 November 2014.

Local Government Infrastructure Services (LGIS) continues to provide oversight and assistance with procurement and management of consultancy and contractor services for the NDRRA works. The finance officer has commenced to work specifically on NDRRA finance management and reporting.

The appointment of the NDRRA project engineer (in the role of Council's NDRRA Project Manager) has concluded with interviews and an appointment anticipated shortly. With the finalisation of the wet and dry hire tender, eligible, qualified local contractors will be invited to participate in the construction works yet to be tendered.

The Emergent and Counter Disaster Operations funding paid to date totals \$660,483. The value of restoration works approved is \$10,859,488 after trigger costs has been deducted.

CORPORATE/OPERATIONAL PLAN, POLICY REFERENCE:

Council's operations are conducted as required by the Local Government Act 2009, and in accordance with all applicable policies and the Douglas Shire Council Operational Plan 2014 - 2015 adopted 27 June 2014.

FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

Council's operations are conducted in accordance with the 2014-2015 Budget adopted 27 June 2014.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS:

The new Council's operations have been subjected to an early risk assessment process, which will shortly be followed by the finalisation of the Risk Policy and a comprehensive Enterprise Risk Management Plan.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS:

SOCIAL: The diverse communities of Douglas are Council's clients. Council's operations, services and programs are designed and delivered to support the people of Douglas.

ECONOMIC: The twin pillars of financial and economic sustainability underpin all Council's operations.

ENVIRONMENTAL: Environmental management is a priority consideration in the delivery of all Council operations and services.

INTERNAL/EXTERNAL CONSULTATION:

Council's General Managers and Branch Managers have been consulted and have contributed to the preparation of this report.

ATTACHMENTS:

Nil attached.