

**ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING****26 AUGUST 2014****5.6****REPORT FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

Linda Cardew – Chief Executive Officer: #427007

**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 July and part August 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 Participation**

The CEO Unit has been involved with a wide range of community events and activities over the past six weeks. Early July saw Council involved in the delivery and facilitation of NAIDOC activities and events such as Story time at the Library, the flag raising ceremony, the street Parade and an information stall at the family day in the park.

Officers co-ordinated the stall at the Mossman Show with a theme of 'Connecting with our Communities'. This was our opportunity to promote the use of the web site and Facebook page to assist our communities keep informed about all that Council offers. This concept was also implemented at the Port Douglas Family Fun Day along with a children's colouring area.

In August, at the time of writing this report, a range of events will take place during Seniors' Week commencing on Monday 18 August. Council successfully secured a small grant and is partnering with the Douglas Shire Community Services Association to deliver a morning tea activity on Monday 18 August and have also provided assistance to the Douglas Shire Seniors Inc for their annual Seniors' lunch.

## **Funding**

The CEO unit has been active in identifying and applying for funding with three applications submitted in the past two weeks. Independently or in collaboration with other organisations, Council has submitted a funding application for the ANZAC Centenary Grants program, the Get Out Get Active – Women in Sport and the Suncorp Safer Communities fund.

Council has also received funding for the GraffitiSTOP program from the State Government.

To assist organisations to apply for funding Council hosted a Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing - 'Get in the Game' funding information session. This assisted participants identify what types of projects would be eligible for that particular funding opportunity.

The CEO Unit is responsible for the Community Support Program and was pleased to recommend over \$50,000 in funding be allocated to local organisations with a second round to be announced. To assist organisations in researching and identifying funding opportunities, an officer regularly updates and electronically circulates a grants calendar throughout Council's networks.

## **Website and Facebook**

The website has recently undergone a restructure, with new pages and tools added to make the site more user-friendly. Officers have added an interactive Events calendar, along with other initiatives such as 'Grow me instead' (a schedule of suggested suitable plants for a wide range of situations); the work schedule for road maintenance / slashing and related works for easy community reference; information regarding Council's approach to Community and Engagement and the process for reporting on engagement activities and the supporting small business tools.

Council's Facebook page is a very popular way of getting messages out to our communities. Council has posted 33 items which reached 20,315 users with each post reaching an average of 615 users.

Council has also developed an online film and TV locations database integrated with Screen Queensland. This is designed to position the Shire as the most prominent film-friendly destination in regional Queensland.

## **Community partners**

CEO Unit officers have formed a number of socially and economically beneficial partnerships within Council, throughout the Shire and the region. These include but are not limited to:

- Working with Traditional Owner groups in regards to managing cultural heritage
- Identifying opportunities for job seekers to participate in a work experience program and implement a community services program
- Attending economic development planning and networking workshop with Cook, Wujal Wujal and Hopevale Councils.
- Working across Council to develop and implement signage initiatives
- Attendance at the liquor accord meetings and identifying opportunities to address anti – social behaviour in public places
- A community youth network is in the early stages of implementation.

Officers are also involved in the Green Buildings program which is currently identifying opportunities for efficiencies in regards to electricity consumption and rolling out internal initiatives to reduce power consumption.

## **CORPORATE SERVICES**

### **Governance**

The following policies have been reviewed/established and presented to Council for adoption in the period following the last CEO Report.

- Councillor Remuneration General Policy
- Complaints Management Process General Policy.

A partial desktop audit of Council's Work Place Health and Safety Management Systems was recently conducted by a representative of Local Government Workcare. It was determined that Council was performing adequately in the areas tested. This audit was completed to provide advice on possible improvements to systems pending the formal audit to be completed in December this year.

With the finalisation of the Audit Committee composition, an Audit Committee Induction session will be held late August to familiarise all members with the purpose and process implementation of the Committee.

Preliminary discussions have been held with Council's Internal Auditors to formalise the Internal Audit Plan for 2014/15 financial year. It is anticipated that this plan will be presented to the Audit Committee's first official meeting for endorsement.

A project team has been formed in conjunction with the CEO Unit to develop the first Annual Report for the new Council. This work is expected to be completed in October 2014 upon the Queensland Audit Office signing off on Council's 2013/14 financial statements.

To streamline cash handling processes, EFTPOS facilities have been introduced into the Daintree Ferry operations and the Port Douglas Markets. Utilising electronic payments will increase efficiencies in the receipting process and assist reduce the administrative burden in reconciling transactions and funds received.

The Queensland Audit Office has commenced a performance audit on fraud management in local government and all councils will be required to complete an initial questionnaire on frauds detected and processes implemented for preventing fraud. Following this planning phase a number of councils will be selected for a detailed audit.

### **Finance and Information Technology**

The 2014/15 Annual Budget was finalised and presented to Council on 27 June 2014 for adoption. Since this time the Finance staff have been concentrating on the preparation of the 2013/14 financial statements to meet the Queensland Audit Office (QAO) timeframes for the final audit. The QAO will complete the 2013/14 audit in the late September 2014.

With the early adoption of the annual budget, the first half yearly rate notices were issued on 28 July 2014 with the due date for payment being 28 August 2014. There were 9,285 notices issued and the value for the first half yearly levy was \$12,650,288.

Douglas Shire Council is among 23 Queensland local governments identified by the Department of Local Government to undertake a Credit and Financial Sustainability Review for the 2014/15 financial year. All de-amalgamating councils were identified for this review regardless of whether they had submitted applications for loan borrowings or not. These reviews will be facilitated by the Queensland Treasury Corporation and Council has until 31 January 2015 to provide relevant financial information for this review to progress.

Over the last few months the Information Technology (IT) section of Council has been progressing the implementation of the Authority software modules. This implementation was split into 2 phases with the first phase comprising of essential business modules being completed by 1 January 2014 to enable Douglas operations to commence. The phase 2 has seen further modules being added such as:

- Infringements
- Cemeteries
- Animals
- General Registers (several registers established)
- Human Resources
- Report Wizard.

Other modules in the process of being developed include Trust Register, Capital Value Register, eServices (with ePayments a priority) and Asset Management.

In addition to the implementation of further software modules, key staff have been identified as Module Champions with the aim to utilise their skills to review business processes to create efficiencies in the delivery of services.

### **Library**

Each year in July every public library is required, under the Service Level Agreement for Public Library Services between Library Board of Queensland and the relevant council to complete or provide:

- Public Libraries Outcome report
- Copy of the Library's strategic/operational plan
- Annual statistical return
- Signed service level agreement 2014-2017.

This Council has completed all requirements under this agreement.

Statistics for the first 6 months of Douglas Library operations comprise:

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|---|---|--|
| • Library membership                              | 6,814                                       |  |
| • New members                                     | 383   |  |
| • Public visits                                   | 38,507 (Mossman 36180; Port 2,327)          |  |
| • Loans   | 43,907 items (31% adult fiction, 25% DVD's) |  |
| • Reference enquiries                             | 3,740                                       |  |
| • Reservation activity                            | 10,313                                      |  |
| • Inter-library loans supplied to library members | 113   |  |
| • Library website visitors                        | 1,101                                       |  |
| • PC Bookings (Mar-June)                          | 2,179                                       |  |
| • 52 library programs with                        | 1,589 attendees.                            |  |

During the month of July the Library celebrated NAIDOC with storytelling, a "Hip hop with Tahlia" school holiday workshop, photographic & artefact displays and Mossman Gorge Centre artists, currently Naurita Briscoe, are on display in the foyer.

Another display of great interest has been the "Jack Dwyer Australian bird egg collection" which is large and significant collection that was donated to the Douglas Shire Council by his family in the mid-1990s.

Library staff are currently working towards re-establishing Computer Classes at Mossman Library in September. Classes offered will include Computer Basics, Intro to Email and Intro to Internet.

## **OPERATIONS**

### **Development and Environment**

#### **Planning Scheme Review**

Councillor workshops have commenced and a matrix of topics to be discussed over the next few months has been provided.

#### **Planning Applications**

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 Appeals**

Appeals with respect to 36 Murphy St and 27 Murphy St, Port Douglas are continuing and are being managed in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Environment Court. Both matters have been set down for hearing in November. An appeal has been lodged by the developer of the new Exemplar coach depot. Solicitors have been appointed.

### **Regulatory Services**

#### **Local Laws/Environmental Health/Plumbing**

Early morning camping checks are continuing in order to manage illegal camping. Officers are in discussions with the Port Douglas Police in order to develop a joint response where appropriate.

Dog registration renewals have been prepared and will be issued shortly. Complaints regarding dogs, including dog attacks, remain high and continue to absorb a large amount of officer time.

The application for leave to appeal with respect to the three dangerous dogs still in the pound, remains on foot and is proceeding according to directions issued by QCAT.

Significant work continues to be undertaken to improve the functioning of the permit and licence registers and procedures.

## **WATER AND WASTE**

### **Water Service Provider Registration and Drinking Water Quality Management Plan (DWQMP)**

In a review recently conducted by Council it was revealed that information regarding the number of water and sewerage connections in Douglas supplied to the Water Supply Regulator before de-amalgamation, was inaccurate. Consequently Douglas was classified as a large water service provider with added requirements in terms of reporting and monitoring. During August a new registration application was lodged with the Regulator to amend the Douglas classification to a medium water service provider.

Douglas Shire Council, as a water provider is currently operating under the Cairns Regional Council DWQMP. As a new service provider, Council is required to review and amend the current DWQMP. This review has now been completed and a Douglas Shire DWQMP was submitted to the Water Supply Regulator for approval. Amendments to the original DWQMP include the in-house analyses of water samples by the Douglas Shire water laboratory and a full review during 2014/2015 on the feasibility of a chlorine-free trial.

### **Rutherford Road water main**

Due to several failures of the old 80mm a/c main, the 1.3km Rutherford main was upgraded to a 100mm class 16 main. The upgrade commenced from the corner of Miallo and Rutherford Road through to Mossman Daintree Road with a total of ten new service connections and three new hydrant connections. It took DSC Water Reticulation staff a total of 10 working days to complete and was connected into the 225mm main on Miallo Road with a pressure of 600 kPa. This upgrade will ensure uninterrupted supply with increased volume to these rural communities.

### **Sewer infrastructure**

It has become evident that the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (EHP) will implement more stringent standards to control the infiltration into the sewer network in Mossman. Proactively the Wastewater team commenced with the sewer lining activities and the refurbishment of manholes in Mossman as part of the 2014/15 capital works program. Some residents in Mossman with manholes in or near their properties will soon receive a letter from Council to inform them of manhole refurbishment schedules and the impact thereof on their daily activities. All measures are taken to minimise the impact on residents.

During July, Xylem was appointed to perform annual preventative maintenance on the remaining wastewater pump station equipment in Mossman and Port Douglas. This program was successfully completed and it finalised annual preventative maintenance activities on all water and wastewater mechanical equipment.

### **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). For the period 1 July to 15 August, a total of 187 water samples were taken in the 4 water supply schemes and tested for physical, chemical and microbiological parameters with 100 of these water samples taken from the reticulation network. In addition, wastewater compliance samples are taken from the treatment processes, bio-solids, final effluent and receiving waters.

The landfill at Killaloe and the transfer stations are also sampled and monitored according to EHP licence conditions and the Killaloe Transitional Environmental Program (TEP).

### **Infrastructure**

#### **Civil Works**

Staff have been progressing submissions to Queensland Reconstruction Authority with submissions to date totalling \$10,986,656. Submissions for the CREB and China Camp areas will be completed in the next few weeks. Emergent works patching of the Bloomfield Track has recently been completed, including grading of the northern section. Council is waiting to receive the approvals from the Queensland Reconstruction Authority so the appointment of contractors to undertake the cyclone restoration works may commence.

Asphalt overlay (reseals) have been completed at: Bow Street, Mossman; Somerset Drive Cul-de-sacs; Whiteley Road, Miallo and Couthard Close, Newell Beach. The continuation of the asphalt program in late August will include Junction and Bonnie Doon Roads, Snapper Island Drive and Shannonvale Road. Works on Bonnie Doon Road will see the inclusion of a bicycle path approximately one kilometre long on the southern side of this road.

Construction of the Woobadda Bridge continues to progress with the two bridge bands (arches) now in place. Council's Public Spaces Coordinator has met with the Wet Tropics Authority and engineering consultant to understand design, revegetation and approval processes to ensure that public light vehicle access remains open during the next construction phase.

Repair works have now been completed at Niau Bridge in Upper Daintree and the sand crossing across the Daintree River has been re-installed. The road maintenance grading program is now about half-way through with the crew currently in Whyanbeel Road.

Execution of a new contract with the Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR) for the Road Maintenance Performance Contract (RMPC) for the 2014/15 financial year has been finalised. Cyclone Ita emergent works have now been completed by Council staff and contractors on the Mossman-Daintree Road.

### **Engineering**

Project and design works have commenced on recent successful grant projects relating to the Connolly, Mowbray River Road and Whyanbeel causeways and the Daintree Gateway.

### **Public and Natural Areas**

The Deed of Agreement has been signed and submitted to DTMR for the landscaping of the intersection (roundabout) of Captain Cook Highway and Port Douglas Road. Quotations for the landscaping works have been requested and submissions close in early September, 2014.

Use of human resources provided through Corrective Services commenced in the past month with two labourers working with the Mossman and Port Douglas garden crews.

Beach nourishment is continuing at Newell Beach although some interruptions were experienced due the king tides and wind that was experienced around the recent "supermoon".

### **Fleet**

A number of vehicles that were recently replaced will be advertised for public purchase via a tender process in the next few weeks. Delivery of the new patching truck and emulsion system is expected before the end of August.

### **Facilities Maintenance**

The installation of ultra violet light emitters to the library, administration building and Port Douglas Community Hall was completed and solar panels are currently being fitted to the Council Administration Building roof. The expected payback period for the solar panels from grid power savings is three years.

### **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.