

ORDINARY MEETING 5 MAY 2015	5.7
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LITTERING & ILLEGAL DUMPING SURVEILLANCE - FINDINGS

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RECOMMENDATION:

That Council –

1. **Notes the outcomes of the Illegal Dumping Surveillance Camera Program; and**
2. **Supports the ongoing use of camera surveillance as part of a holistic strategy for the management of illegal dumping activities.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The *Illegal Dumping Surveillance Camera Program* was a State Government initiative that Douglas Shire Council successfully implemented in 2014. The Program aimed to help local governments by providing tools to assist investigators in delivering success in compliance and deterrence of illegal dumping activities.

Four (4) specially designed cameras for the monitoring of hot spot locations were supplied as part of the grant. Over the six (6) month period Council effectively implemented a program of works spanning the installation, monitoring and recording of findings relating to illegal dumping.

Program objectives were fulfilled, and the experience in deploying the cameras in the field offered Council staff a valuable insight on how to maximise the use of camera surveillance as a tool for the investigation of illegal dumping activities.

A notable achievement of the Program was the positive changes to Council's internal procedures. Council's reporting system and work orders processes have been enhanced, and staff can now collect quality information about the recording and reporting of complaints, the actions performed and costs associated with cleaning up littering and illegal dumping.

BACKGROUND:

Littering and illegal dumping is a serious problem in Queensland. According to the Keep Australia Beautiful National Litter Index (NLI), Queensland is the most littered mainland state in Australia.

To assist local governments with managing litter and illegal dumping, the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (DEHP) made available funding through an *Illegal Dumping Surveillance Camera Grants Program*.

In April 2014, Council was successful in obtaining a grant for the supply of four specially designed surveillance cameras.

COMMENT:

Council's clean-up of the Shire's roads and opens spaces is generally initiated by staff who check locations and remove litter or dumped material without a complaint being lodged. While complaints are a helpful source for locating littering or dumping sites, Council officers play an important role in the reporting of illegally dumped material. Perpetrators are unlikely to be found and clean-up costs are generally absorbed by Council.

The implementation of the surveillance cameras provided an opportunity for officers to examine the issue of littering and illegal dumping more pro-actively, and examine the impacts to Council.

Hot spot locations where the cameras were installed over a three (3) month period included –

1. Rocky Point, Wonga
2. Foxtan Park, Mossman
3. Teamsters Park, Craiglie
4. Headland access off Killaloe Dump Road, adjacent to Lot 131 on SR 853
5. Noah's Range

Note: the number of cameras deployed in the field reduced to three as one of the cameras was stolen a day after deployment at Rocky Point.

Notable points of the Program -

- After the implementation of the Program, an increase in the incidence of illegally dumped material was recorded. During the three (3) month period sixty four (64) cases of illegal dumping/littering were attended to by Council staff.

Note: Prior to the implementation of the program, Council was recording approximately seven (7) instances a month for dumping/littering.

- The projected yearly cost to Council for clean-up, based on program figures, is \$55,000. Costs include labour, the use of special vehicles (e.g. backhoes), transport and disposal.
- One offender was identified which otherwise would not have been possible without the cameras. Six (6) other offenders were identified as part of the enhanced reporting framework established as a result of the Program. All offenders removed and properly disposed of the material at their cost. No PINs were issued.

PROPOSAL:

1. That Council continues to purchase and use cameras as part of a holistic illegal dumping management strategy.

The development of a strategy that considers a number of measures targeting attitudinal and behavioural change would be the most effective method for reducing rates of illegal dumping. Camera surveillance would play a key role in supporting a holistic program aimed at facilitating changes to behaviour within the community.

CORPORATE/OPERATIONAL PLAN, POLICY REFERENCE:

The implementation of the Illegal Dumping Surveillance Cameras is consistent with Council’s Corporate Plan *Theme 3* –

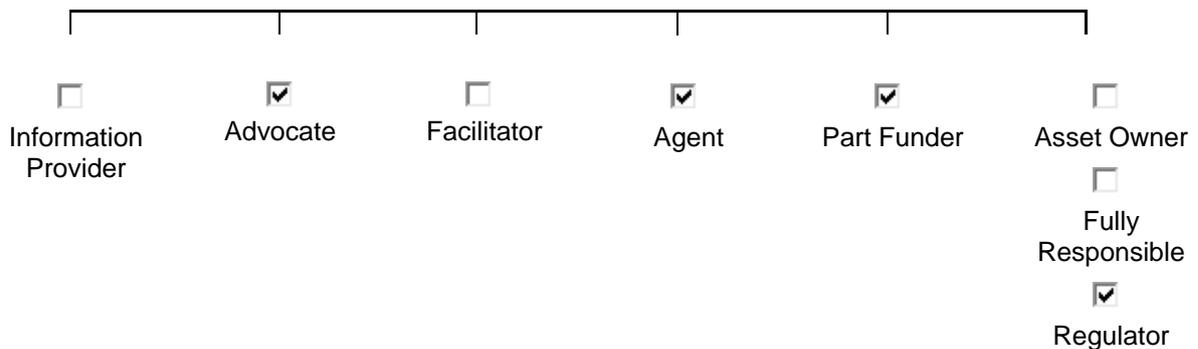
Improve Environmental Performance

3.1.4 *Promote a culture within our communities of “zero tolerance to littering” and introduce an educational, regulatory and enforcement regime to underpin it.*

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:	Supporting communities and groups by advocating for certain actions from other organisations (usually other levels of government).
Agent:	Delivering a program or activity for another organisation (usually another level of government).
Part Funder:	Sharing the cost of a program or activity with other organisations.
Regulator:	Meeting the responsibilities associated with regulating activities through legislation or local law.

FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

The cost associated with the *Illegal Dumping Surveillance Camera Program* was shared with the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection. Council was provided with four (4) surveillance cameras and a handbook. A further rebate of \$1100.00 was successfully applied for and used to purchase ancillary camera items.

Council’s costs were absorbed as part of routine operations e.g. installation of cameras, checking footage and following up on leads and organising new internal procedures between Council work areas.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS:

Failure to adequately address illegal dumping can cost Council thousands of dollars in clean-up costs, create unsightly hazards within the community and adversely affect the local environment.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS:

ECONOMIC: It is envisaged reductions to clean up costs over time should occur with a properly implemented holistic program targeting illegal dumping. Failure to adequately address illegal dumping may impact on tourism, beaches, and public spaces.

ENVIRONMENTAL: Addressing illegal dumping issues will have a positive effect on the local environment with a reduction in environmental pollution and unsightly hazards.

SOCIAL: Addressing illegal dumping through enforcement and education has the capacity to contribute to cultural shifts in attitudes and behaviours to littering and dumping leading to a decline in incidents.

INTERNAL/EXTERNAL CONSULTATION:

The decision to carry out the surveillance program was shared between Development & Environment and Infrastructure Services. Council's Business Support and ITC Units were also involved with setting up and improving internal reporting systems.

ATTACHMENTS:

Not applicable.