

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE**13****11 JULY 2012**

GARDEN AWARDS

David Warmington: 1/59/13-01: #3525548v2

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that Council discontinues the Streetscape Garden Awards program, noting the development of The Cairns Post-organised Garden of the Year competition.

INTRODUCTION:

This report outlines seek Council's direction on future involvement in the delivery of Streetscape Awards.

BACKGROUND:

The Cairns Regional Council Garden Awards originated as the Cairns Mulgrave Garden competition in the early 1980s. The aim of the event was to beautify the city, surrounding regions and stimulate interest in gardening. The judging standards and guidelines were developed by the Far Northern Horticultural Society which was founded in 1947.

Original award categories were chosen to represent garden types from Residential and Non- Residential sectors. The categories were continuously reviewed over the period to ensure they were relevant to gardening trends and as a result the number of categories, complexity and the required budget slowly increased.

Changes were implemented over time in an attempt to provide greater exposure and relevance of the event to the general public. Interest in this event had always in general been limited to participants and as a result there was little public benefit.

In October 2009 the following resolution was adopted by Council "That Council approves the retention of the annual Garden Awards with a revised focus on front gardens only and an emphasis on environmental issues such as water use, recycling and sustainability". The event was also renamed as the Streetscape Awards. This event was programmed in both 2010 and 2011 and despite extensive publicity programs (refer Attachment 1), attracted very limited interest from the public.

During 2011 The Cairns Post launched its own Garden Awards which were supported by the Cairns Landscape Industry Cluster. The Local Government Housing Commission also runs a successful annual Garden Awards event.

COMMENT:

Council's attempt to restructure the Garden Awards to produce a more meaningful and relevant event with increased public benefit was unsuccessful. Attachment 2 shows the level of involvement from the community towards Garden Awards over the last four years. Streetscape entries have been lower than the earlier Garden Awards events. In 2011 there were only 19 entrants across the 8 categories in the Streetscape Awards despite an intensive publicity program run by Council's Marketing and Communication Branch.

Attachment 3 is the result of a survey of some of Queensland's larger local government authority's involvement in garden competitions. While there are two authorities that still deliver a traditional garden competition the majority have either ceased to deliver or have developed partnerships with their local newspaper.

Attachment 4 is a letter from Cairns Garden Club stating their preference to return to the original format of Garden Competition. This format attracted the participation a large proportion of Cairns Garden Club members.

However, a similar award program is now being offered by The Cairns Post. The Cairns Post on-line service currently advertises the Garden of the Year competition with four categories:

- Best open garden
- Best balcony garden
- Best courtyard garden
- Best vegetable garden.

The category winner will win a voucher for \$1,000 from Cairns Landscape Industries Cluster (CLIC), with one selected as the overall Garden of the Year and winning a \$5,000 CLIC package.

The Cairns Post has indicated a desire to continue with their garden awards program and is currently deciding the format that this will take going forward. Should any consideration of a partnership between The Cairns Post and Council around The Cairns Post awards program be made, this would be via formal submission to Council.

Options

- Streetscape entries for the past two years do not support a continuation of that format.
- The existence of The Cairns Post Garden of the Year competition works against Council reverting to the earlier Garden Awards format.
- Given the above, it is recommended that Council no longer run streetscape or garden award programs.

CONSIDERATIONS:**Corporate and Operational Plans:**

This activity has fallen within the remit of the Botanic Gardens team to manage.

Financial and Risk:

The Streetscape Awards program in 2011 had a direct cost to Council of \$5,000 as well as around \$8,000 in staff costs.

The costs to Council of the options considered below are as follows:

- Option 1:** (Withdraw from Awards) no cost.
Option 2: (Retain Streetscape Awards) \$5,000 direct costs.
Option 3: (Return to traditional Garden Awards) \$39,000, comprising \$19,000 direct costs plus \$20,000 in kind. Requires review of current service levels and programs to accommodate.

Sustainability:

The activity will contribute to a reduction in GHG emissions.

The activity will cause the loss of an existing program, but will contribute to operational cost savings and will result in improved efficiency.

CONSULTATION:

Kim Morris from the Cairns Landscape Industry Cluster is The Cairns Post organiser of The Cairns Post Garden Awards, and has been consulted in the development of this report. The Cairns Garden Club have been advised that Council is currently revising its position in relation to the delivery of the Streetscape Awards.

OPTIONS:

Option 1: Council retires the Streetscape Garden Award program.

Option 2: Council retains the Streetscape Garden Award program.

Option 3: Council returns to the original format of traditional Garden Competition.

CONCLUSION:

Given the low level of interest in the Streetscape Awards and the existence of The Cairns Post Garden of the Year competition, it is recommended that Council discontinues the Streetscape Garden Award program.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 Streetscape Awards 2011 public material

Attachment 2 Recent Award entrant data

Attachment 3 Survey of some of Queensland's larger local government authority's involvement in garden competitions

Attachment 4 Letter from Cairns Garden Club

David Warmington

Curator Botanic Gardens and Sugarworld

Malcolm Robertson

Acting Manager Parks and Leisure Services

Ian Lowth

General Manager Community, Sport and Cultural Services

Attachment 1

Streetscape AWARDS 2011

To enter simply fill out this form and either:

Mail it to: PO Box 359, Cairns QLD 4870

Email it to: randerson@cairns.qld.gov.au

Drop it to: Cairns Botanic Gardens, Edge Hill; Council's Customer Service Centre in Spence St, Cairns or Front St, Mossman; any branch of Cairns Libraries

Alternately, go to the Council website www.cairns.qld.gov.au and click on the link on the front page and follow the prompts to submit your entry online.

Your details:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Name of street and numbers within the street for the streetscape categories: _____

Contact number: _____

I/we utilise the following sustainable gardening practices in our garden/streetscape:

<input type="checkbox"/> Drip irrigation	<input type="checkbox"/> Native plants
<input type="checkbox"/> Natural fertilisers	<input type="checkbox"/> Mulching
<input type="checkbox"/> Natural pest control	<input type="checkbox"/> Composting

Please submit (if possible) with your entry three photos (either as electronic files or printed) of your garden/streetscape with your entry. These will be used in promotion of the competition this year as well as next year's competition.

Terms and Conditions:

- The judge's decision will be final and no correspondence will be entered into.
- An eligible home garden is one in which a professional gardener is not employed (lawn mowing and digging are not considered professional gardening work).
- Power poles, manholes, street signs and the like, which are not under the control of the homeowner are allowed for during the judging.
- For commercial and industrial gardens, work by a professional is acceptable.
- Printed photos cannot be returned.

This year's Streetscape Awards is sponsored by:



Streetscape AWARDS 2011



Cairns Regional COUNCIL

Major Sponsor



Cairns Post Weekend Post

Media Sponsor



www.cairns.qld.gov.au

Cairns Regional Council's Streetscape Awards is held annually to encourage the residents of the region to:

- Improve the beauty and health of the streetscapes within the region;
- Develop increased awareness of water use;
- Maintain and beautify their front garden/road frontage and the footpath area while planting only trees and shrubs that are suitable for the site; and
- Increase their awareness of environmental issues and sustainable gardening practices.

Entries into this year's competition will be judged using the following

- Landscape design and aesthetic appeal;
- Maintenance standard of garden and footpath;
- Plant selection;
- Energy/water saving measures;
- Compliance with Council's policy on footpaths and landscaping;
- Freedom from environmental weeds.

All gardens must emphasize a high quality appearance from the street (including the footpath area).

Streetscape AWARDS 2011

The Streetscape Award dates for this year are:

Launch of competition: Sunday 26 June at the Sustainable Living Expo held at The Esplanade, Cairns

Close of competition: Wednesday 24 August (for online), Wednesday 17 August (by hand or post)

Judging: 29 August – 7 September

Presentation: Sunday 11 September at 10am to 11.30am at the Visitors Centre, Cairns Botanic Gardens

The 2011 Streetscape Award categories are:

- Best Home Front Garden (the front garden of a residential property)
 - South
 - Central
 - North
- Best Streetscape (a group of three or more houses)
 - South
 - Central
 - North
- Best Commercial/Industrial Streetscape (any non-residential property)
- Best School Front Garden

Definitions of north, central and south areas are:

South – From Edmonton to the southern most border

Central – From White Rock to Kewarra Beach

North – From Clifton Beach to the northern most border

This year's competition has been ramped up with some great prizes on offer for each category.

Runner up in each category will receive \$100 cash.

The WINNER of each category will receive \$300 cash.

Imagine the street party you can have to celebrate your winning streetscape!

Attachment 2**TOTAL NUMBER OF ENTRIES 2008**

Non-residential	
TOTAL	35
NORTH	20
SOUTH	15
<i>FROM OLD DOUGLAS</i>	7
Residential	
TOTAL	28
NORTH	20
SOUTH	8
<i>FROM OLD DOUGLAS</i>	10

TOTAL NUMBER OF ENTRIES 2009

Non-residential	
TOTAL	32
NORTH	19
SOUTH	13
<i>FROM OLD DOUGLAS</i>	6
Residential	
TOTAL	38
NORTH	24
SOUTH	14
<i>FROM OLD DOUGLAS</i>	3

STREETSCAPE AWARDS 2010

Category	Number of entrants
Home Front Garden Urban	26
Home Front Garden (non- urban)	4
Streetscape Urban	6
Streetscape (non- urban)	1
Commercial Streetscape	3
Industrial Streetscape	1
Industrial Streetscape	3
TOTAL	44

STREETSCAPE AWARDS 2011

Category	Number of entrants
School Front Gardens -	4
Front Garden - Nth, Central, South	12
Commercial and Industrial	3
Streetscape - Nth, Central, South	0
TOTAL	19

Attachment 3**Queensland Local Authority involvement in Garden Competitions**

Local Authority		Direct involvement in a Garden Competition	Comment
Brisbane City Council		No	BCC does not run a garden competition however support sustainability initiatives
Rockhampton Council	Regional	Yes	RRC coordinates a traditional Garden Competition
Gladstone Council	Regional	No	GRC provides in-kind support to the local newspaper - Gladstone Observer
Mackay Regional Council		No	MRC does not have budget capacity to run Garden competitions
Townsville Council	Regional	No	TRC does not run a garden competition
Tablelands Council	Regional	Yes	Tablelands Regional Council coordinate a traditional Garden competition

Attachment 4



CAIRNS GARDEN CLUB Inc

PO Box 503
Cairns Qld
4870



18 May 2012

The Chief Executive Officer
Cairns Regional Council
P O Box 359
CAIRNS QLD 4870

Dear Ms Russell

The Cairns Garden Club Inc encourages this Council to investigate the reintroduction the original annual Garden Awards for the Cairns Council Region. The Awards were changed in 2010 to reflect only the front streetscape and were renamed "Streetscape Awards".

Cairns Garden Club has been associated with the Annual Garden Competition for many years and our members have always been happy to volunteer time and skills, however there has been a marked lack of interest from our members with the new format of Streetscapes only. We found that visitors enjoyed visiting the entire garden of the category winners (with their permission of course) but find little interest inspecting only what can be seen from the front fence.

We recognize that decisions relating to the 2012 Awards may now be completed, however, we would respectfully request that your new Mayor and Councillors consider this request for future years.

Yours faithfully
Cairns Garden Club Inc.

Susan Bennetts
Acting Secretary

c.c. Mayor, Bob Manning
c.c. Councillors, Cairns Regional Council