

ORDINARY MEETING 27 JUNE 2012	12
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CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S (CEO) MONTHLY REPORT – JUNE 2012

Lyn Russell :jel: 1/3/37-30: #3278759v12

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council endorses the Chief Executive Officer's report for June 2012.

INTRODUCTION:

The following report provides an update for Councillors on current strategic Council issues and actions underway to address them.

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

The following provides a summary of key activities for the month in Marketing & Communications Branch.

The fourth edition of the CRC staff newsletter (print and online) has been delivered. The newsletter continues to be developed monthly and is delivered the first week of the month.

Planning meetings continue for the Cairns and Mossman Shows, Eclipse, and Cairns Airport Adventure Festival. Planning for the Cairns Show is centred on the theme of the community putting themselves "In the Picture" i.e. increasing community involvement in Council events and connections to key projects.

Cairns Airport Adventure Festival

The Marketing and Communications branch managed branding and promotional opportunities for Council in the lead-up to the Cairns Airport Adventure Festival.

The festival received promotion through Council's website, Council Corner, Taxi Driver's newsletter and Council e-newsletter.

Eclipse

M&C developed an Eclipse event and information page on the website. To be launched in mid-June this site will list all community eclipse activities. Small movie and You Tube clips will also highlight the event. M&C have liaised with the Australian Astronomical Society to collate educational information for the site.

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS *continued*

M&C continue to provide support for Festival 2012. M&C have provided guidance on social media campaigns, design, media policy and overall promotion of the 2012 event. Marketing & Communications and IS have brought the Festival website onto the corporate platform to bring management of the website in-house.

Events calendar

M&C launched the online version of the community events calendar. The online calendar provides the opportunity for the community to submit community events for inclusion on Council's website. The online tool compliments the hard copy version of the six-month event calendar, which is due for distribution in July 2012.

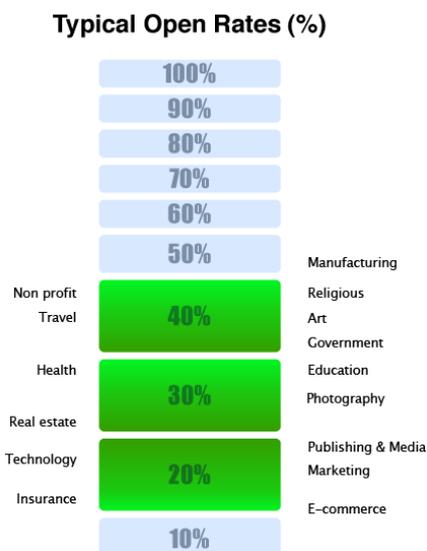
Council's online events calendar is available to promote community-run, not-for-profit events being held within the Cairns Regional Council area on specific dates.

Events or activities must be open to and relevant to the general community within the Cairns Regional Council area. This excludes ongoing activities, club meetings, regular sporting fixtures and church services.

Events relating to or held by a group which conflicts with council's corporate mission/vision will not be listed.

E-newsletter – *Cairns Regional Council In Focus*

Marketing and Communications launched Cairns Regional Council In Focus, an e-newsletter covering Council issues. May was the first edition and was distributed to 3079 Recipients.



Of these 3079 recipients, 877 people (30.44%) opened our email. We anticipate that many more than 877 indeed received and read the first edition of In Focus, however they did so in their 'preview pane' rather than double clicking the message in order for it to be recorded as an "open". Similarly people who read the headlines of the newsletter on their phones/tablets without opting to 'download the full content' (i.e. images/graphics) would not have been recorded as an "open".

As illustrated by the graph to the left, achieving a 30-40% open rate for our newsletter puts us at the top of the normal range for Government publications – an absolutely excellent result for our first edition. If we consider this in relation to the notes above, it's likely we actually achieved higher than this average for audience penetration and interest.

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS *continued*

253 unique (i.e. separate/individual) people clicked on a link in the first edition of *In Focus* and a total of 436 clicks were made all together.

The top 3 links clicked were:

- Current Council job vacancies
- Enter the 2012 Cairns Festival Grand Parade
- New mayor and Councillors (link went to our webpage with their photos)

The top 3 email clients people used to access *In Focus* were:

30.0%	Outlook 2000, 2003, Express
15.2%	Outlook 2010
13.7%	iPhone

Out of 3000+ contacts on our database only 198 (6%) bounced due to their email addresses no longer being valid.

M&C provided ongoing advice and assistance in a review of the newly created Cairns Library website. M&C continue to provide assistance to the Botanic Gardens in the creation of their website.

Other activities for the month of May include:

- Continued to deliver Council messages to the community via fortnightly Cairns Sun and Gazette Council Corners, Babinda Bytes and Cairns Sun “Hot Topic” responses. Messages during April; free Daintree Ferry travel for Easter, free greenwaste disposal, ANZAC Day services and road closures, Cairns Airport Adventure Festival, and infrastructure works under way.
- Provision of web editing services and support to all departments for content on corporate website and intranet. During April, communications staff in Infrastructure Services and Planning & Environment (who had completed the pre-requisite web tool training) began editing for their specific content areas. M&C now provides these editors with ongoing support, content review and publishing approval. M&C continues to undertake web editing for all other departments and during April, some 57 editing requests were actioned.
- Communication services for Economic Development & Innovation Unit, including content management of InvestCairns website, publication of April eUpdate newsletter, editing of ED&I Strategy document, review of inbound delegation request form, and preparation of new Tropical Innovation Profile booklet (for release at Tropical Innovation Awards launch in May).
- Promotion of Council news and events via Facebook page and Twitter.
- Respond to public comments and questions received via Facebook and Twitter.

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS *continued*

- Management of YourSay online community forum, including responding to public comments received via the forum. May statistics show 370 active participants (members), 3,998 site visits and 7,805 page views.
- Communication services and support for Water & Waste, including coordination of marketing for works in progress.
- Web editing and communication support for sustainability issues in the Planning and Environment Dept.

Media

- Distributed 20 media releases and Community Service Announcements during May.
- Print media utilised 60% of media releases, radio 75% and television picked up 50%. In the radio category, AM stations (ABC, 4CA, 4KZ, etc) utilised 55% of press releases, while FM stations (Hot FM, Sea FM, Zinc FM, etc) picked up 50%.
- Media releases that were utilised in all three forms of media were on the following topics: Statutory meeting of Council, maintenance on the Blue Arrow walking track, launch of the 2012 Tropical Innovation Awards, election of the Deputy Mayor, NBN information breakfast and suspension of the CEP.
- In total, 218 separate news items directly relating to Cairns Regional Council were recorded during May. Of those, 81 (37%) were initiated by or published content from a media release.
- Other topics that received significant news coverage during May include the proposal for de-amalgamation, Defence Posture Review, Esplanade boardwalk injury claim, formation of the Bruce Highway Crisis Management Group, Taylor Point development appeal and the proposed relocation of V8 Supercars race to Cairns.

Events

The events team assisted with the launch of the Tropical Innovation Awards this month with pre-planning of the event and logistics as required as well as running the event on the day.

Other ongoing work by the team include the organisation of the 2012 ALGWA QLD State Conference which is being organised completely by the Senior Events Officer including the sourcing of sponsorship, marketing, promotion and planning of the event.

Planning is already underway for the Mayor's Christmas Appeal and Carols with the introduction of a new sub event for Christmas called "Caroloke". This community based event will seek out performers from across the region to perform at the Carols. A venue partner has been confirmed with 6 heats and one final being held at Cairns Central. A media partner is currently being sourced.

Carols this year will be completely organised by the Events Team with a new program which is being expanded to include a broader number of the greater community.

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS *continued*

Organisation of the 25 Year Service Dinner has also commenced with the booking of the Novotel Oasis, Cairns. Although previously this event has been held at the Hilton, it was thought prudent to downgrade the venue slightly and reduce costs to keep in line with reducing expenditure on the Council's budget.

The Senior Events Officer is also assisting with the coordination of the Economic Development Australia Conference being held in Cairns in September with the organisation of the Gala Dinner and International Dinner for the event. This assistance was request through the council's economic development unit.

The Senior Events Officer also attended the first Older Person Advisory Committee meeting on behalf of M&C. Discussions are continuing with OPAC regarding delivery of Senior's Week activities which will take place in August. M&C will play a coordinating and advisory role in the delivery and promotion of these events.

Civic Events

May citizenship ceremony took place on Monday 28 May instead of Thursday due to a clash with the Mayor's diary. Of the 61 people due to become naturalised, eight (8) did not show for the ceremony. This was the first citizenship ceremony for the new Mayor Bob Manning.

School Tours

No school tours for May.

Logistic Support:

The Marketing and Communications Branch provides logistical support for Council sponsored events and functions including external organisations utilising the Civic Reception Rooms and equipment. In May support was provided to 15 corporate events including Indigenous Service Delivery Meeting, EBA Single Bargaining Unit & Launch of TIA Awards. With 6 external organisation including Cairns Local Marine Advisory Committee, Rotary Debate - Semi Finals & Department of Regional Australia - Northern Qld Strategy.

Social media

In May we:

- Ran our first legal Facebook competition using a custom Facebook tab contest application.
- Completed our social media monitoring trial with Buzz numbers on 31 May 2012
- Worked with IS to build a new website for Cairns Festival
- Worked with HR and CRC lawyers to unsuccessfully recover access to Cairns Festival's social media accounts
- Finalised the CRC Cairns Show display with HotCroc
- Prepared the Social Media Policy +report to be presented at the next Council meeting

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS *continued*

Facebook statistics for the period 1-30 May 2012 were:

(<http://www.facebook.com/CairnsRegionalCouncil>)

Despite the 30% increase in new fans, reach and a 10% increase in the number of impressions our content is making on Facebook, our engagement levels were down again in May on the Cairns Regional Council Facebook compared to February and March.

We remained 40% above our weekly target of 50 “people talking about this”. With completion of the Cairns Festival website and legal case we will endeavour to increase our engagement levels in June and July.

Facebook have once again made significant changes to their timeline interface. We can now schedule future posts directly in Facebook and pay to promote individual status updates/posts/photos at the same time of posting.

We paid \$11 to promote Council’s online community event calendar and had 3 event submissions from the community to the calendar within 24 hours. We will continue to learn about and experiment with the new features in June and July.

At the completion of our monitoring trial with Buzz numbers we identified a significant bug in the buzz numbers software. Buzz worked on the error and have extended our access until 15 June so we can extract the correct data. We hope to have a report to table next month.

Cairns Regional Council Facebook page

Total New Likes (Fans):	51
Total Unlikes (Fans leaving):	7
Check-ins (Spence St)	15
People Talking About this (avg):	13 Daily, 78 Wk, 261 Month
Engaged Users (avg):	22 Daily, 149 Wk, 509 Month
Total Reach (avg fans & friends of our fans)	693 Daily, 2829 wk, 7680 month
Total Impressions (avg whole of FB inc non fans)	3215 Daily, 23427 wk, 95102 Month

Twitter statistics for the period 1-30 May 2012 were:

(<http://www.twitter.com/CouncilCairns>)

New Followers: 53

Total Followers: 835

Qwitterers (people who've quit following us): 4.

Our qwitterers were: @CairnsFestival, @SEOResults, @joelmaloney,

Total Mentions: 36

Total re-tweets: 83

Our Top 5 Links on Twitter May:

1. [What's going on in Cairns & Port Douglas](#) [online event calendar] (34 clicks, 2 RT)
2. Stinger Net Removal (26 clicks, 7 RT)
3. [Name our e-newsletter Facebook competition](#) (20 clicks, 15 RT)
4. [FREE Mulch Giveaway](#) (10 clicks, 5 RT),
5. [FREE Active Games in the Park Mooroolooloolo](#) (9 clicks, 6 RT)

CAIRNS ENTERTAINMENT PRECINCT / CAIRNS PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE UPDATE

The following provides a summary of key activities for the month from the Cairns Entertainment Precinct Project Manager.

Following the suspension of all work on the Entertainment Precinct, a preliminary examination of options has been undertaken to assist Council in considering alternative proposals. This work, together with an outline project delivery plan was presented to Councillors at a workshop on 18 June 2012. The outcome of the workshop was a direction from the Mayor and Councillors to establish a team to be tasked with the role of securing the \$97.3 million grant funding, currently committed, for an alternative project. In this regard, Council's direction is the subject of a separate report to Council's Ordinary meeting of 27 June 2012.

As an alternative project will need to be supported by appropriate business planning, during June, the 2011 Project Assurance Framework (PAF) Business Case was reviewed to determine the work that would be required for an alternative project, and whether and to what extent the Project Brief remains appropriate for a new project.

The PAF considered three major outcome areas and it is assumed that these will continue to form the basis of a business case for any alternative site:

- Arts and cultural development outcomes
- Community engagement outcomes
- Economic outcomes.

The Executive Team directed that high level consideration of the following two options for an alternative project be undertaken.

1. Development opportunities on the Ports Administration site (located at Hartley Street and Grafton Streets, Cairns)

To undertake this work, the following assumptions were made:

- The portion of the site required for a Performing Arts Centre (PAC) will be leased to Council on a peppercorn rent
- The project brief for the PAC component of the CEP will remain intact (1000 seat theatre, 450 seat flexible theatre, rehearsal space, bar and ticketing facilities)
- 220 on site carspaces are required
- Some plaza area is required
- Additional commercial uses (eg hotel and exhibition space) may be provided on site by others
- The closed portion of Grafton Street between the Convention Centre and the subject site may be consolidated with the available site area
- The site will be masterplanned.

Very preliminary site planning was undertaken by CA Cox Rayner to determine the capacity of the site to accommodate the above elements. Four options were produced together with a very simple staging study. These options were presented to Councillors at the workshop on 18 June 2012.

CAIRNS ENTERTAINMENT PRECINCT / CAIRNS PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE
UPDATE CONTINUED

The possible benefits of each of the schemes on the Ports Administration site are:

- The site has the ability to accommodate revenue generating uses (although not owned by Council)
- The potential to share venue operation costs with Convention Centre
- Project may be stageable
- No basement carpark
- Direct connection to Convention Centre and future Grafton Street carparks
- Possible avoidance of contamination management
- No White's Shed costs
- No heritage constraints
- No extensive services infrastructure relocation
- Limited Ports operations issues to consider.

A preliminary and again very high level, opinion of cost for discussion purposes only, was also prepared for each of the CA Cox Rayner options by cost planners, WT Partnership. The estimate of costs for the performing arts centre (no commercial hotel or exhibition space) ranged from \$118.5million to approximately \$124.5 million. The major items excluded from the CEP budget are White's Shed, basement carparking (replaced by above grade parking) and major services relocation. The 450 seat flexible theatre has been included.

2. The Civic Theatre

The potential to refurbish or renovate the Civic Theatre was also briefly examined. The "do nothing option" (ie retain the Civic Theatre as is), and a refurbishment option were both subject to extensive analyses in the 2011 PAF study (refer to the Strategic Assessment of Service Requirements and the Business Case).

The PAF identified the following failings of the existing Civic Theatre:

- Stage size – The smallest in regional Queensland, and half the size of what is required to host major performances
- The venues 669 seat capacity has limited commercial appeal as revenue per show is significantly lower than in other comparable regional cities in Queensland.
- Many promoters that do bring shows to Cairns are required to scale back their productions to fit either the capacity of the stage or the lower revenue because of limited seating
- Dressing and changing room facilities are inadequate
- Public toilets are inadequate and there is only one DDA compliant toilet facility.
- No separate rehearsal facilities that are generally required for larger performances
- The foyer size is inadequate in that it holds only 25-30% of the audiences before a show and during intermissions. Two consequences of this are:
 - Repeated overcrowding for the majority of events
 - The overflow of patrons to external areas.

CAIRNS ENTERTAINMENT PRECINCT / CAIRNS PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE
UPDATE CONTINUED

- No direct disabled access directly from the auditorium to the foyer. The building is non DDA compliant. The only access for people with a disability (or with prams) to the auditorium is to exit the foyer and travelling around the outside of the building (regardless of weather conditions) to enter via a ramp leading to a side entry door.
- No access to the stage for performers with a disability
- Administration staff are accommodated in external demountable buildings
- Storage for sound, lighting and stage equipment is provided by an external shed
- The orchestra pit only accommodates 16 performers
- The height of the proscenium arch and fly tower are too low for major performances
- The civic theatre seating is the original seating from 1974, are irregular and are the subject of regular complaints
- The loading dock door height is inadequate at 2.2m
- No suitable cross-over space between one side of the stage and the other
- Inadequate storage facilities.

In the event that the transfer of project funding from the CEP could not be achieved, and a limited budget only is available to refurbish the Civic Theatre, in June Civic Theatre staff were asked to provide an order of priority for renovation works.

For the June review, the following was assumed:

- The “do nothing” option is not a viable option; it will meet none of the current and future community needs, and will burden Council with increasing maintenance costs. OH&S issues, and Code compliance will not be addressed, leaving Council exposed to litigation.
- Refurbishment can be achieved at different budget levels, depending on the priority given by Council.
- Priorities identified by the Civic Theatre management are based on the comfort and experience of the patrons and some accommodation space for performers as follows:
 - Upgrade and extension of foyer areas
 - Upgrade and extension of bar/catering service areas
 - Expansion of toilet facilities for patrons (especially female)
 - Auditorium seating and carpet
 - Improved access to all public areas for the disabled community (including backstage areas)
 - Increased dressing room facilities (including toilets and showers)
 - Additional multi-purpose rehearsal room/band room/overflow chorus room/green room.
 - Replacement of a/c and ducting.
 - Upgrade of stage – flylines, increased depth, orchestra pit, wing space
 - Replacement administration offices (donga is 5 years old and will only last another 5 or so) although it may still be better value for the community to continue with a demountable

CAIRNS ENTERTAINMENT PRECINCT / CAIRNS PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE
UPDATE CONTINUED

Cox Rayner architects considered several ways to approach a possible renovation, applying the following broad masterplanning strategies:

- a. The foyer is internalised and of insufficient size. Opening up the foyer to engage externally will improve amenity and awareness.
- b. An additional venue (the 450 seat flat floor theatre) will provide flexibility and work off the base of the staff and technical facilities present.
- c. The existing venue requires significant internal modification but strategies to develop around the existing shell rather than modify it will a) reduce downtime, b) reduce cost c) possibly allow the new venue to be operational prior to affecting the existing auditorium.

A sketch plan showing some planning of potential extensions to the Civic Theatre was provided to Councillors at the above workshop. While too early to suggest costs, Councillors were advised that the building price index has increased by approximately 2.46 times since the first Civic Theatre study undertaken in 1994. Not included this multiplier are the additional costs that would be incurred due to the ongoing deterioration of the building and services, the increased expectations of performers and audiences, and the application of legislation and building codes that did not exist when the building was opened in 1994.

3. Preliminary delivery plan for an alternative performing arts centre project

On 28 May 2012 the Executive Team requested a list of project tasks be prepared, showing the activities that would need to be undertaken to plan and deliver and alternative project.

In summary, the outline plan shows the estimated periods which would be required for all processes relating to the termination of the CEP project, and for a new project: funding negotiations, procurement of consultants, business planning, design and statutory development assessment leading to construction. Assuming a clear Council direction to proceed, a project start date of 1 July 2012 and a 36-month delivery program, a new PAC could be delivered by an estimated date of November 2016.

The outline project delivery plan can only be indicative at this stage as no alternative site has been secured. It makes no allowance for the impact of wet seasons or extended consultation or negotiation periods. It is important to note however that, as with the CEP, the early phases would be highly intensive and would need to be well resourced and funded, to enable tasks to be successfully undertaken in parallel, if the work is to be completed in the shortest possible time.

CAIRNS ENTERTAINMENT PRECINCT / CAIRNS PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE
UPDATE CONTINUED

4. The following issues requiring urgent resolution were also submitted to Councillors at the workshop:

- What cultural, community and economic outcomes does Council require from an alternative project?
- What is Council's direction regarding the Commonwealth Funding Agreement?
- What is Council's direction regarding the State Funding Agreement?
- What is Council's direction regarding the site lease?
- What is Council's direction regarding the suspension or termination of all contracts?
- What is Council's direction regarding the Development Application and its assessment by Ports North?
- What project funding is available if the CEP does not go ahead?
- Council was also advised that CEP expenses of approximately \$6.3 million in 2011/2012 will be treated as operational costs if the CEP project does not proceed.

As noted above, Councillors considered the highest priority to be the retention of \$97.3 million in external funding for the region, with the Mayor directing the establishment of a team to undertake the necessary negotiations.

5. Project expenditure to 31 May 2012.

Previously, project expenditure was reported on a monthly basis to Council through the Entertainment Precinct Committee. At the direction of the new Council, the CEP Committee was not established for this current Council term. Project expenditure is therefore reported in the CEO's report.

May expenditure comprised all consultants costs invoiced at the end of April, prior to the suspension of consultants' and contractors' contracts on 1 May 2012, plus some minor project expenses incurred during May. Expenditure on this basis in May 2012 was \$718,266.46. As contracts have now been suspended, only minor expenses, including delay costs for White's Shed, will be incurred unless specific requests are made of consultants.

REGIONAL MANAGER DOUGLAS UPDATE

The following provides a summary of key activities for the month from the Regional Manager Douglas.

Carnivale

Despite torrential rain on the day of the scheduled Carnivale street parade causing the postponement of the parade till 1 June the 2012 Carnivale Program of events was a great success.

Whilst poor weather threatened the re-scheduled parade, almost thirty floats braved the suspicious weather conditions along with up to 5,000 spectators to enjoy the Heavenly Bodies Themed parade. Mossman Primary School was the winner of the best community float while Quicksilver won the best overall float title. An impressive fireworks display over Anzac Park signalled the finale of the Carnivale 2012 program at the conclusion of the parade.

Beach Day was also a great success with an estimated 2,000 people attending. Over 300 native plants were given away at Council's stall. Council's Beach Cricket Team put in a sterling performance winning their way through to the competition finals.

Mossman Shire Hall

Mossman Shire Hall celebrates its 75th Birthday this month with a celebration dance and memorabilia exhibition. The dance to be held on Friday 22 June is expected to see over 120 locals take a step back in time with songs of a bygone era. The Memorabilia exhibition will be opened until Tuesday 26 June and features displays on the pioneers of the local area, the history of Mill Street, the construction of the Hall including the old Council Offices and stories from locals recounting their most memorable experiences of the hall.

In recognition of the Hall's 75th Birthday, Fiona Sewell from ABC Radio will be hosting her morning program from the Shire Hall on 3 July. The exhibition information panels will also be on display on the day of the broadcast. The ABC is encouraging listeners to come and visit the Shire hall during Fiona's broadcast.

The Hall has recently undergone a facelift with the completion of non-structural works on the hall and this is part of Council's ongoing capital works and maintenance program for the building.

Daintree Ferry Smart Card

A meeting with tourism and business operators in the Daintree will be held at Lync Haven Rainforest Retreat on Wednesday 18 July from 4.00pm. This meeting is to gather feedback from the operators on the Smart Card Ferry trials with the latest trial being completed in the Easter School Holiday period. Information from this meeting will be included in a report to Council's Economic Development Meeting in August which will also include the more detailed analysis of the data retrieved as part of the smart card activation by users and also the random surveys undertaken by Compass Research of smart card holders. A workshop will be held with Councillors prior to the report to Council and this is expected to be held week commencing 23 July.

REGIONAL MANAGER DOUGLAS UPDATE CONTINUED

Annual Mossman Show

The Annual Mossman Show will be held 22-23 July 2012. This year Council will again be hosting a stall which will continue on with last year's popular activity of shooting goals, with this year's theme being: "*Slam Dunk – Icons of Douglas*". Visitors to the stand will have the chance to shoot for a goal in five different basketball hoops with each hoop depicting an icon of Douglas. These icons are: Mossman Gorge, Daintree Rainforest, Four Mile Beach, Sugar Wharf and the Mossman Shire Hall which this year celebrates its 75th birthday. Prizes for slam dunking include: native plants from Council's nursery, water bottles, shower timers and stationary items promoting National Year of Reading.

Council is also providing support and assistance to the Agricultural Society in staging the show. This in-kind assistance is part of a funding and resource agreement between Council and the Show Society and includes preparation of the main arena and additional car parking site next to the hospital.

Sugar Wharf

Repair works on the pylons of the historical Sugar Wharf commenced on 12 June. The initial works includes the cleaning of metal pylons which involves a sandblasting process and painting of the pylons. Work required on the timber pylons will be undertaken at a later date.

Scaffolding has been erected underneath the Sugar Wharf to enable contractors to safely access the area.

As Sugar Wharf is a heritage listed property, Council has received the appropriate permits to undertake the works from DERM.

There will be some access restrictions to Sugar Wharf during the works that are expected to take approximately 6 – 8 weeks. The stairs/small boat platform will also be temporarily closed during this time

Whilst there will be restrictions on the wooden wharf area locals will still be able to use the concrete Prince's wharf for fishing.

Council has also given consideration to the popular wedding market as Sugar Wharf is a sought after wedding venue. There will be no interruptions or impacts on any booked weddings to occur at Sugar Wharf during June and July whilst the works are being carried out.

Councillor Induction Program

As part of the Councillors Induction Program a bus tour of locations in Douglas including a visit to the Front Street Administration Office to meet staff was held on Monday 4 June. This tour provided Councillors with the opportunity to visit sites involving significant Council projects such as the Daintree Gateway and Port Douglas Master Plan with relevant Council Officers on hand to provide project briefings.

REGIONAL MANAGER DOUGLAS UPDATE CONTINUED**Coral Coast Triathlon**

The oldest triathlon in the southern hemisphere the Coral Coast Triathlon was held in Port Douglas on Sunday 27 May. Four Mile Beach was the back drop to this spectacular event. Traffic management plans and Council's communications to the community ensured traffic access to town including the finish line at Four Mile Beach were maintained with minimal disruption or inconvenience. The event was hailed as a huge success by organisers with over 1,000 competitors.

Challenge Cairns

The first weekend in June saw Port Douglas host the cycling leg of the Challenge Cairns Iron Man. Locals gathered along the cycling route in Port to cheer on the competitors. Whilst the main highway to Cairns was closed from 6.30am – 6.00pm traffic plans ensured comfortable access into town and the weekly markets on the waterfront.

Port Douglas Waterfront Master

After the adoption of the report to Council on 30 May regarding the demolition of the identified buildings on the Port Douglas waterfront that is part of the Port Douglas Master Plan, Breakthrough NQ were awarded the contract to demolish the identified buildings.

Work on the demolition commenced week commencing 18 June and it is expected that the demolition, top soiling and turfing of the site will be finished by mid-September. This will then allow open access to this area for the public and provide in the interim a grassed waterfront space for general community use.

A workshop was held for Councillors on 18 June to provide the new Council with a full briefing on the Master Plan project.

Solar Eclipse

Work continues on organising the management of the Solar Eclipse in Port Douglas to occur on 14 November 2012. The Solar Eclipse Local Task is meeting regularly and also is linking into Council's broader Events Operations Team. The Port Douglas Chamber of Commerce is currently working on a range of surveys with local businesses to assist in designing the final program schedule for the Port Douglas Eclipse Festival to be staged for a week across the Eclipse period. Meetings have been held with organisers of the Eclipse marathon regarding a range of logistical matters including the outline of the course.

OTHER MATTERS OF INTEREST

National General Assembly (NGA) of Local Government, ACT 17-20 June 2012

I have attached a detailed report on the proceedings of this year's NGA, for Councillors' information. The report summarises the presentations from each speaker and the key themes emerging from the resolutions considered by the Assembly.

Councillors who would like more details about any of the issues raised are invited to contact me for assistance

ATTACHMENTS:

National General Assembly report

LYN RUSSELL PSM
Chief Executive Officer

REGIONAL COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT FORUM
SUNDAY, 17 JUNE 2012

State of the Regions report – rethinking regional development as focus:

- Focus on investment infrastructure
- Standing Council on Regional Development – July, 2012, Alice Springs meeting.

Dr Peter Brain and Dr Ian Manning – presentations

- Australia does not effectively plan for regional development.
- Outcomes are poor, compared to similar countries that aggressively plan for development.
- Need for a rethink in planning for regional development.
- 2012 - \$100bn investment in resource development – so Australia's growth should be 4-5% not 2-3%.
- If regions are to grow, they must attract investment, both public and private.
- Queensland has negative impacts in non-resource sectors, especially tourism = two speed economy.
- When mining starts to wind down, there will be a huge hole in the economy.
- State of the Regions report calls for a high level Commission of Enquiry into the cost benefits of the current mining boom.
- Clear example of under investment is in transport infrastructure in regions.
- Problem of housing shortage/affordable housing.

Strategies

- Regions need to identify unutilised resources/ strengths.
- Design strategies to leverage growth from those resources (200 "peer" LGAs and 300 "inefficient" LGAs in report)
- Dedicate a flow of funds to long term investment.
- Make loans strictly for investment projects.
- Use local knowledge and administrative capacity.

Su McCluskey : Chief Executive Officer, Regional Australia Institute

Independent policy think tank and research organisations – focus on solutions.

Research focus: Four (4) Themes

1. position and potential – population mobility
2. realising opportunity eg FIFO, mobility
3. successful transitions eg natural disaster
4. better services and engagement – the "infrastructure crisis"

Need for a competitiveness index for regional Australia.

Intent to conduct regional forums especially regarding issues around FIFO (social, health etc) and natural disasters.

Glenys Beauchamp, Secretary, Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Art & Sport

- 2% of national GDP to local government.
- Value of RLCIP program.
- Reconstruction efforts recognised.
- Return of \$2.65 for every dollar invested in roads and rail.
- Ernst & Young report commissioned by Federal Government – released at this event – prioritising investment and innovative funding models.
- Value of RDA Roadmaps.
- Role of ACELG in showcasing best practice.

REGIONAL COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT FORUM
Continued

RDA Fund Advisory Panel Chair, Christian Zahra

RADF =

- competitive grants : \$1bn over six years
- economic, environmental and social projects
- creative and innovative solutions
- LG role :
 - identify projects to meet local priorities
 - work together on regional projects
 - delivery

Round 1 : 553 applications seeking \$2.05bn
 35 projects approved - \$150m
 Low eligibility rate

Round 2 : \$200m for projects \$0.5 - \$15m
 459 EOIs → 162 selected to proceed
 34 announced to date - \$140m
 RDA Committees each identified 3 projects to proceed
 Issue of matching \$500k funding from smaller LGAs – perhaps a themed round?

Panel Discussions

Dr Marcus Spiller, SGS Economics & Planning : Regional Cooperation and Development

- argues for strong partnerships between City and Country
- need for thorough diagnosis of local strengths and weaknesses, assessing regional advantage
- keeping inflows ahead of the outflows
- understanding the infrastructure; skills set, leadership and governance; connectedness, business innovation.
- argued that the prospects for regional Australia are tied to those of the big cities
- regional centre growth drivers:-
 - consumption driven expenditure
 - human services/health care
- need for customised policy response
- questions the merits of decentralisation
- role of cities in supporting services economy
- metros as key drivers of regional prosperity

Rob Kerin, Chair, Regional Development South Australia

South Australia service delivery model described

Loddon Mallee RDA: Craig Neimann, CEO Bendigo

- 10 LGAs and 70 towns

Role : regional strategic planning - big and long term
 communication

leadership

advocacy role to government

agriculture – 25% of output

population 320,000 - 1/3 is Bendigo City

Regional strategic plan – regional change strategies – 5 key areas

NATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY
DAY 1 (800 delegates)

President's overview : key issues

- Roads to Recovery extension to 2019 welcomed
- RLCIP -vs- RDAF funding
- cost shifting continues
- constitutional recognition a priority
- High Court decision on Williams case imminent
- climate change adaptation
- waste management
- planning
- indigenous services
- NBN rollout

Areas of concern :

- progress of review of Financial Assistance Grants
- constitutional recognition response
- price of carbon – impacts on Councils with emissions over limit

The Hon. Simon Crean's address

State of the Nation : performance of Australia's economy

- economic transformation is ahead
- 4.3% growth last year (USA 1.2%)
- importance of diversification of economic base
- securing local governments slice of the action
- low unemployment, low inflation
- need to build strong regions through partnerships with all tiers and private sector
- RDA network and RDA fund – rounds 1 and 2.
- Regional Australia Institute established
- review of financial assistance grants following High Council decision this Wednesday (Williams case)
- constitutional recognition / financial recognition – need to get it right (by October)
- need for compelling argument to States, Opposition and community
- take to next election
- use of landfills for methane capture.

Phillip Adams' address

- profound sense of disconnection with Federal Government
- collapse of regard for Government
- youth disconnection with democracy
- Greece / Spain economic concerns
- need to energise nation for referendum
- local government as the most potent and powerful level of government – effecting change locally

Mr Laurie Wilson : President, National Press Club

- great economy – pessimistic community
- political conjecture regarding Gillard and Rudd

NATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY **DAY 1 continued**

Constitutional Recognition: Panel

(Dr Keith Suter; Mr Jim Soorley; Professor George Williams and Cr Genia McCaffery)

- need for bipartisan support politically
- financial recognition – Commonwealth → Local Government
- use of celebrity endorsement – sports, television etc
- focus on outcomes, not process – “what’s in it for me”, funding for local activities
- lack of community knowledge of issue – need for concise explanation / “elevator speech”
- mobilise self interest
- do not be a defeatist.

Strategy :

- campaign vigorously
- LG \$\$ on the table
- get States on side
- Federal Government must fund a public awareness campaign
- social support – develop public understanding
- community champions required
- project team, media, advertising
- political and community strategy
- three strikes and we’re out – this is our last chance!

“Williams on Williams”

- local government now on thin ice regarding direct funding from Commonwealth
- Williams Case – school chaplains in State Schools funding by Federal Government, \$\$\$ and religious freedom
- negative result will bolster local government’s case for financial recognition – urgency regarding Roads to Recovery Program.
- success previously on referendums on funding that people benefit from (eg Pharmaceutical Benefits)

ALGA’s Plan

- develop a referendum question capable of support
- preparing draft bill → no unintended circumstances
- need to sell the message – campaign
- timing is crucial given election cycle
- 6-8 months
- funding and professional marketing campaign
- use of strategic advisor for three months.

Infrastructure Address : Mr Darrin Grimsey, Ernst & Young Recommendations

- we all need to pay for infrastructure
- extensive review – 13 recommendations for reform
- require consultation with key stakeholders
- national financing authority for local government
- facilitating private finance – Australian Government
- facilitating sustainable revenue streams – Australian Government
- councils to review infrastructure portfolios
- local government impact statements in the business cases for all new development
- national procurement advisory body required
- Australian government portal for LG grants required
- formal regional structures need to be developed.

NATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY **DAY 1 continued**

“Strong Foundations for Sustainable Local Infrastructure” – Ernst & Young report – on website.

Mr Michael D’Ascenzo, Commissioner of Taxation, Australian Business Register

- free data, available to local government
- use for forecasting and research purposes
- business data base for profiling, emergency management, identifying business clusters, verifying entity details
- use for community consultation for NBN rollout
- use the ABN to verify details before issuing payments for procurement purposes
- geo-codes identify business locations / clusters

www.abr.gov.au

- easy access to ABR data – free query tools.

National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility (NCCARF)

- networks – based at universities
- research funding / management
- communication.
- research themes – 96 projects

www.nccarf.edu.au

- local government portal
- project information
- reports
- fact sheets
- funded to June 2013.

NATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY DAY 2

Planning Address : Maxine McHugh

- roots of planning are in altruism – what is best for the community
- need for “contest of ideas” – robust debate
- 13th century design – Siena still works today
- today’s challenge – smart thinking for livable cities
- affordable housing, greater choice, housing mix; density, transport issues
- less restrictive zoning requirements
- RBA and COAG reports
- need for new forms of housing to meet changing needs
- deciding what not to do is as important and deciding what to do.

Senator Christine Milne : Leader of the Greens

- support for constitutional recognition for:-
indigenous people; and
local government
- importance of advocacy campaign; get organised at local level; target is 2013
- Simon Crean needs to respond to Expert Panel’s report
“Greening local government” – peak oil, global warming, loss of biodiversity, issue of sustainability for local government
- Green Building Council; green star community building rating released
- planning; risk analysis of impacts of climate change on local infrastructure
- housing orientation - on block → energy efficiency, solar applications
- engaging in debate on national electricity market reform.

NATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY DAY 2 CONTINUED

Senator Christine Milne : Leader of the Greens

Continued

- carbon package opportunities; \$24m to a local government program for solar hot water for community facilities
- investment in large scale renewables – funding available
- \$1bn Biodiversity Fund available – local government needs to develop projects for funding
- biodiversity, green space connectivity – NRM groups involvement.
- landfills – a major issue / opportunity
- use of greenwaste as compost
- E-waste issues, Mobile Muster; Fairfax changes as an example of the massive change occurring
- container deposit legislation supported by Greens
- battery recycling opportunity.

Mobile Muster :

- 90% of phone components can be recycled
- 300 Councils are participating.

Senator the Hon Mark Dreyfus : Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency

Clean Energy Future Plan :

- carbon pricing
- renewables
- energy efficiency
- cut pollution.
- local government implications and opportunities
 - predicted cost increase of 0.75 by Treasury
 - households supported through tax cuts and increased payments
 - 1.7% increase in social security payments to recipients
- landfills will have obligations if they emit 25,000 p.a. tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions
- 32 councils exceed threshold
- \$26 per tonne is the rate
- gas capture strategies required
- estimated cost is 13c – 47c per week per household, off set by federal compensation payments
- not an excuse for the private sector to gouge councils.

Opportunities

- reduce emissions
- carbon farming; credits for captured methane
- don't lock into contracts for waste disposal; periodic price reviews will occur.
- electricity costs ↑ \$3.30 per week per household; 10% increase
- \$200m Community Energy Efficiency Program; grants of up to \$5m for retrofits of Council building and facilities
- 63 successful recipients to date
- street lighting concerns; low energy options and problems with suppliers; great reduction in carbon pollution and cost savings possible.

NATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY DAY 2 CONTINUED

Planning Symposium

- 80% of planning approvals occur under delegation in Australia; State focus on fast-tracking.

Mr Michael Frost : Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Reform Council

- review of capital city strategic planning systems
- report released 2 April 2012
- 9 criteria – expert panel reviewed each city

Recommendations

- focus on improved integration of planning
- continue intergovernment collaboration, including local government
- need for improvements in implementation, results, private sector investment, community engagement.

Ms Dorte Ekelund. Major Cities Unit, Department of Infrastructure and Transport

Our Cities, Our Future Report, May 2011

State of Australian Cities 2011 Report covering:-

- retaining competitiveness
- population growth
- low carbon living
- climate change
- fairness and social inclusion
- Strategy -v- planning systems -v- development assessment
- National Urban Policy
- Australian Urban Design Protocols
 - web based tool, case studies
- Liveable Cities Program
 - finished May 2012
 - \$20m over two years
 - successful projects announced
- Urban Policy Forum
 - to advise government on the implementation of the National Urban Policy.

Active Travel Agenda / paper being developed

- walking, riding, public transport, 2012 publication

Warren Mundy, Productivity Commission

Local Government as a regulator (study 2012)

- consultation with local government in a variety of ways.

Purpose

- identify regulatory responsibility by State
- clarify the extent local governments implement State policies
- assess business costs from different local government regulatory practices
- identify leading practices, including from overseas

Included : planning / zoning, building and construction; food safety, public health and safety, environment, parking and transport.

NATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY DAY 3

The Hon Dr Gary Johns, Associate Professor, Public Policy Institute, Australian Catholic University

- many unsustainable councils
- underspending on infrastructure
- cost shifting

Solutions

- seek more funds - "good luck" - other priorities
- change the rules - query re: referendum success
- raise taxes - "feel brave?" - could do more
- cut services
- become more efficient.

Case Study : BCC \$26bn budget, 8000 employees

PIA "Healthy Spaces & Places" (see website)

- national guide for designing communities
- case studies and examples
- capacity building program and training package
- supported by the Heart Foundation

Senator Barnaby Joyce, Shadow Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Water

Issues:

- financial recognition of Local Government
- carbon tax
- equitable distribution of funding between small and large Councils
- criticism of RDA funding process and limitations.
- support for Ernst & Young report proposal
- Bridges to Recovery program supported.

Professor George Williams, University of New South Wales - results of High Court decision

- funding of school chaplains has been declared unconstitutional
- raises questions regarding Roads to Recovery
- stronger case for reform as a result
- programs in doubt any funding without legislation being passed to support it
- high levels of uncertainty regarding local government
- local governments now in a poorer position regarding direct funding
- but bolsters our position regarding need for a financial constitutional change, hence urgency and immediacy for a referendum.

RESOLUTIONS PASSED AT CONFERENCE : SUMMARY

142 motions were submitted to the National General Assembly.

108 motions came from New South Wales and Victorian Councils, mainly metropolitan based.

Of the 564 Councils across Australia, only 58 submitted motions to this year's Assembly.

Key Areas of Concern:

Infrastructure

- Constitutional financial recognition for local government.
- Funding to local government for essential infrastructure.
- More equitable share of funding to local government.
- Cost shifting to local government.

Planning

- Coordinated planning - Federal/State/Local
- Climate change provision / impacts.
- Carbon tax impacts on local government.
- Disaster management support.
- Sustainable development.

Services

- Energy efficient street lighting.
- Recycling / resource recovery.
- Contained deposit schemes.
- Asbestos management.
- Ageing population.
- Funding for community programs.