

ORDINARY MEETING 23 NOVEMBER 2016	3
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OUR CAIRNS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROJECT

Robyn Holmes | 1/60/3-23| #5266805-v2

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

- 1. Notes the outcomes of the Our Cairns community engagement project;**
- 2. Considers information gathered as part of the process to develop Council's new Corporate Plan;**
- 3. Distributes information gathered to State and Federal members of Parliament representing the Cairns Local Government Area, and to State Government Departments, Translink and non-government agencies.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The purpose of this report is to formally table the outcomes of the Our Cairns community engagement project which was undertaken to understand residents' priorities and vision for the Cairns region as input for the new Corporate Plan; to gauge the community's views on a series of topical questions; and to provide Council with feedback on its operational performance.

The Our Cairns project included:

- The Our Cairns Community Survey (conducted 1-31 August 2016);
- The Avatar Survey (conducted 1-31 August 2016);
- The Compass Research Telephone Survey (conducted during August – September 2016);
- The Our Cairns Community Forum (conducted on 14 September); and
- The Our Cairns Stakeholder Forum (conducted on 15 September 2016).

The community survey, which was self-selecting, attracted 6446 respondents – an unprecedented result and far in excess of Council's expectations, given that previous community surveys have only yielded 500-600 responses. The majority (5766) of respondents opted to do the survey online, with 680 completing a hard copy version.

Participants also submitted more than 1200 photographs (sample of images contained in Appendix A) to depict what they love about Cairns and what they would like to see in Cairns. The Avatar survey, which was used to identify values, attracted 943 respondents.

The telephone survey was a random sample of 300 households structured to reflect the appropriate proportions of the population in the Cairns Regional Council area by age and gender.

The two forums were held after the survey to explore the results and look at priorities for the future. The Community Forum was attended by 85 randomly selected residents representing all nine divisions, while the Stakeholder Forum involved 70 representatives from local industry, government and businesses

COMMENT:

Objectives

The objectives of the Our Cairns project were to:

1. To engage widely with the local community, businesses, and other stakeholders across the region to identify their vision and key priorities for Cairns to assist Council to plan for a positive future through the development of its new Corporate Plan.
2. To genuinely understand the community's values, how people want to live, how people envisage their future, and what's most important to them.
3. To identify how Council and the community can work together to meet these key priorities, and how this can be achieved practically;
4. To encourage a greater level of interest and participation from parts of the community that might otherwise not be willing to engage; and
5. To assess Council's overall performance and to identify issues on a suburb basis with a view to improving operational services.

Council engaged consultants, Articulous Communications, to assist in the development of the survey, to facilitate the forums, and to assist in the analysis of the results.

Promotion and Participation

The project, conducted over August and September, was initially promoted at the Cairns Show where 1500 participants were engaged through several activities, and hundreds of people provided their email contacts so the link to the Our Cairns Community Survey could be provided when it became live on 1 August 2016.

The Community Survey was promoted through an extensive media campaign targeting all media; "pop up" stands at key shopping centres in the region; at key locations in Gordonvale and Babinda; through participating school newsletters; at a local film festival; at Seniors Week activities; a direct email to 13,000 businesses; through the Taipans Fan base; as an insert with the issuing of rates notices; through Council's social media platforms; and through Council's corporate e-newsletter, Living in Cairns.

The survey was completed by 6,446 people, with 78% of all respondents owning property in the Cairns region. The largest age group was aged between 45-54 (23%), and 57% of respondents were female.

Avatar Survey

Concurrent with the community survey, an Avatar survey was conducted to understand community values and encourage broader participation. A total of 943 people created Avatars. The Avatar survey respondents rated 'Natural Environment' and 'Home and Job' the highest for most important element to lifestyle, and the majority said Cairns made them feel 'At Home'.

Standardised telephone survey

A standardised telephone survey was conducted during August and September comprising a random sample of 300 households structured to reflect the appropriate proportions of the population in the Cairns Regional Council area by age and gender, as indicated by Australian Bureau of Statistics data. This was independently undertaken by Compass Research.

Forums

Two forums were conducted following the survey to explore the insights of the survey and to explore further the aspirations of the Cairns community for the future of the city. Key themes and results from the Our Cairns survey helped shape the agenda and were used as a basis of discussion for both forums.

The participants looked more deeply at the priorities for the future of Cairns as identified in the survey, how this might be achieved, possible solutions and who could help drive them. Participants took part in a variety of interactive exercises which encouraged them to think about their role as representatives of the region (rather than as themselves), and to identify ideas that appreciate local constraints and opportunities, are feasible, implementable and should be prioritised in order to evolve the Cairns of today into the Cairns of the future.

A total of 363 people nominated for the 100 positions available for the Community Forum, with attendees chosen using a random selection software to represent all nine divisions of the Cairns local government area. The Stakeholder Forum involved 70 representatives from local industry, government and businesses.

OUTCOMES:

Our Cairns Surveys

Results from the broad Community Survey did not differ greatly from the telephone survey in the Topical questions section, but did reflect some different priorities in the Vision question section. Demographics were also similar, with the broad community survey attracting more respondents in the older age groups. The full comparison between the two surveys can be read in Appendix C.

Topical Questions

1. There was strong support for both an additional bin for green waste, as well as an annual kerbside collection. The community was willing to pay slightly more for an additional green waste bin than the annual collection.

2. There was slightly stronger support for adding fluoride to the water supply, but it is a polarising issue with strong support for and against. The older people were the more likely they were to oppose fluoridation, while those aged between 25-54 years were the most likely to support adding fluoride.
3. There was strong support for a rectangular stadium, for light rail to be considered, and for part closure of the Esplanade to traffic for shared zones.
4. There was no strong consensus on how best to manage flying foxes although a third of people believed they should not be impacting on homes and businesses and nearly another third wanted them actively managed and dispersed.

Our Vision Questions

1. Cairns' green, tropical and protected environment is one of the most strongly held values in the community.
2. The community wants their Future Cairns to be recognised for being a green tropical region that values its natural assets, but with greater economic diversity and a reputation for being a Smart Region, with less reliance on tourism for its prosperity.
3. The environment, liveability and sustainability were the most important considerations to meet the community's regional needs now and into the future. However, at a very local level today, the community wanted council to focus on safety, traffic and footpaths.
4. Issues of greatest importance varied across age. Youth were more concerned about sustainability and the environment, middle aged respondents were interested in liveability and environment, while seniors were more interested in safety and liveability.
5. Future-proofing the economy from shocks to tourism was considered the most important complex question to tackle, followed by the opportunity to make the most of renewable energy.

Our Council Questions

1. The majority of residents are satisfied with the performance of Cairns Regional Council and gave positive feedback on their interactions with Council. 83% of respondents marked Council a score of 5 (satisfactory) or above for performance, while 81% marked Council a score of 5 or above for interaction with the public.
2. The community believe Cairns Regional Council excels at hosting festivals and events, and want Council to continue to focus on festivals, events and the performing arts in the future, but saw an opportunity for Council to provide more work on preserving the built and natural cultural heritage.

Our Cairns Forums

Over the course of two days, hundreds of insights, suggestions and ideas were gathered. Generally, the ideas can be clustered under a number of themes - economic growth and diversity; building a sustainable future and the importance of Cairns' natural assets; the need to improve traffic and transport to support lifestyle; using technology to improve prosperity or the environment; and the importance of providing equal access and opportunities for all residents.

Our Cairns Community Forum Key Themes

- Diversifying and future proofing the economy
- Improving transport options and easing traffic congestion
- Securing jobs for youth
- Building a sustainable future for Cairns
- Ensuring clean living, sustainability and renewable or 'green' energy resources
- Protecting the environment and its assets
- Keeping Cairns green
- Providing more culture, events and services
- Seeking more regular communication from Council

Our Cairns Stakeholder Forum Key Themes

- Planning for traffic and transport as a smart city
- Continuing to support tourism but growing the economy in other ways
- Growing education opportunities
- Maintaining the lifestyle of Cairns
- Looking at other key priorities including equality and access, diversity, partnerships, and community services
- Building stronger and more partnerships across government and the private sector
- Looking at technologically advanced ways to protect the environment
- Focusing on developing a smart city, using technology and resources to drive innovation
- Ensuring equality in service provision for all members of the community
- Council planning with input from sectors and other groups
- Seeking grants for cultural activities

ANALYSIS:

Due to the unprecedented response to the Community Survey, analysis was conducted over a four-week period and resulted in the following reports and documents being generated:

- Appendix A – Our Cairns photo selection (#5273519)
- Appendix B – Compass Report on telephone survey (#5268221)
- Appendix C – Compass Report – Comparing Our Cairns to telephone survey (#5268126)

- Appendix D – Final Report on Community and Stakeholder Forums (#5265645)
- Appendix E – Final Report Our Cairns Survey (#5265592)
- Appendix F – Our Cairns – Yes to Fluoride – sample comments (#5247319)
- Appendix G – Our Cairns – No to Fluoride – mentions categorised and sample comments (#5237334)
- Appendix H – Our Cairns – Rectangular Stadium – mentions categorised and sample comments (#5242072)
- Appendix I – Our Cairns - Light Rail – mentions categorised and sample comments (#5243974)
- Appendix J – Our Cairns – If I was Mayor – categorised and sample comments (#5234168)
- Appendix K – Our Cairns – Responses to Flying Foxes – “Other” Category (#5254116)
- Appendix L – Focus on Suburbs – issues colour coded (#5271008)
- Appendix M – Our Cairns – Responses to Focus on Suburbs – “Other” Category (#5253969)

All documents and reports, as well as approximately 750 images (Appendix A), which are permitted to be published, will be uploaded onto Council’s website and will be provided to officers throughout the organisation to provide input in their particular field of work.

It is Council’s intention to provide the documents and reports to all State and Federal parliamentarians representing the Cairns Local Government Area, to State Government departments, Translink and non-government agencies.

The information gathered throughout the Our Cairns project will be used as input into the process of developing Council’s new Corporate Plan.

CONSIDERATIONS:

Financial:

Due to the unprecedented response and ensuing volume of data to be analysed, as well as an additional forum not originally in scope, the project cost is higher than initially estimated however can be accommodated within the Department budget.

Corporate and Operational Plans:

Support for the project is in accordance with the objectives of Council’s Corporate Plan and Operational Plan.

Statutory:

There are no statutory obligations to consider.

ATTACHMENTS:

Community Survey Analysis #5274516. (Available on Council website)



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