ORDINARY MEETING 28 OCTOBER 2026	5.12

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES MULTICULTURAL GRANTS PROGRAM - RETROSPECTIVE APPLICATION FOR 2027/2029 PROGRAM

L&C | 52/2/7-01 | #7960445

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

1. **Retrospectively endorses the submission of an application under the Strengthening Communities Multicultural Grants Program 2026-27, Youth and Community Connection category, seeking $50,049 for the Multicultural Youth Documentary Project; and**

2. **Delegates authority to the Chief Executive Officer in accordance with the Local Government Act 2009 to finalise any and all matters relating to the application, including the execution of an associated funding agreement should Council's application be successful.**

INTERESTED PARTIES:

- Department of Women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Multiculturalism (DWATSIPM)
- Centacare FNQ
- Trinity Bay State High School
- TAFE North Queensland

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report seeks Council's retrospective endorsement of an application submitted under the Queensland Government's Strengthening Communities Multicultural Grants Program 2026–27, Youth and Community Connection category.

This grant provides an opportunity for eligible organisations, including local government, to seek funding to deliver projects that supports young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to overcome barriers to participation, inclusion and belonging. This intent of the grant program aligns with focus area 2 (Engaged and empowered young people) and 3 (Inclusive and welcoming of communities) in Council's recently adopted Cairns Social Resilience Strategy 2026-2030.

Council Officers are seeking funding to support the planning and delivery of a multicultural youth-led documentary creation project titled 'Telling Our Stories – Youth-Led Documentary Project.' The proposed project is designed to provide opportunities for skills development, strengthening of leadership capacity and the development of stronger

social and community connections and intercultural understanding. The three key deliverables of the proposed project are:

- Establishment of a youth-led Project Leadership Panel to guide project planning, delivery and evaluation as well as overall creative direction.
- Delivery of a series of documentary storytelling, filming and digital media workshops for young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds to create documentary video content.
- Planning and delivery of a youth-led event to showcase the final documentary video content and the work of the young people to the broader community.

An application was submitted for a total $50,049 in grant funding, with a proposed Council contribution of $10,360, resulting in a total project value of $60,409. Subject to Council endorsement and successful funding confirmation, the project would be delivered in the latter half of 2028.

BACKGROUND:

The Strengthening Communities Multicultural Grants Program is a competitive grant administered by the Department of Women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Multiculturalism. It supports initiatives that engage culturally diverse communities and contribute to an inclusive, harmonious and united Queensland. Local governments are eligible to apply.

Under the Youth and Community Connection category, projects must support young people aged 12-25 years to overcome barriers to inclusion and belonging, build confidence and skills, and strengthen intergenerational, intercultural and community connections. Eligible projects must provide young people with meaningful opportunities to contribute to project design, planning, delivery and evaluation. The grant stream provides one-off funding of up to $100,000 for projects commencing from 1 July 2027 and completed by 30 June 2029. Applications for the 2026–27 round closed on 4 October 2026, with outcomes expected by April 2027.

The project being proposed has been developed in response to national social cohesion research, which identifies increasing challenges related to belonging, inclusion and social connection among culturally and linguistically diverse young people. These findings have been validated by feedback from local stakeholders, including Trinity Bay High School, Centacare FNQ and TAFE NQ, who were consulted in the development of the project proposal. The project also aligns well with focus area 2 (Engaged and empowered young people) and focus area 3 (Inclusive and welcoming of communities) in Council's recently endorsed Cairns Social Resilience Strategy 2026-2030.

Documentary storytelling was selected as the means of engagement as it provides an accessible way for young people to explore and communicate experiences of identity, culture and community while developing practical creative and communication skills, while the youth-led approach will ensure participants have the opportunity to build skills, confidence and sense of self-efficacy.

COMMENT:

The proposed project is considered well aligned with the Youth and Community Connection funding category. It provides a structured approach for multicultural young people to influence project decisions, develop practical skills and strengthen their participation and connection within the wider Cairns community. The project will be delivered through three integrated stages:

- Establishment of a Project Leadership Panel
- Delivery of a documentary creation and skills building program for 10 to 20 young participants
- Development and delivery of a youth-led public community screening and showcase.

Project Leadership Panel
The Project Leadership Panel will guide the project's development; identity, themes, promotion, participant experience and measures of success. Panel members will provide advice for addressing participation barriers, cultural inclusion, accessibility, safe storytelling. This approach will provide young people with a meaningful role in project planning, delivery and evaluation. The Panel will be established with multicultural youth representatives from local organisations and schools, including Trinity Bay High School, Centacare FNQ and TAFE NQ.

Documentary Creation Workshops
The documentary creation workshops will support participants to develop skills in storytelling, interviewing, filming, audio recording, editing and post-production. Documentary and creative media practitioners will deliver the technical components with support from experienced cultural leaders and community development practitioners. Participants will determine the experiences and messages they wish to explore and how their stories are presented. Appropriate consent, privacy, cultural safety and digital safety processes will be incorporated into project delivery.

Public Showcase
Following the workshops and post-production editing process, participants will contribute to planning and delivering a community showcase featuring the completed documentaries and behind-the-scenes content. Preparation for the showcase will provide an opportunity to develop practical event-management skills while the public event provides an opportunity to recognise participants' achievements and allow for the documentaries to reach a broader audience including families, peers, school representatives, cultural groups, community organisations and the broader community.

OPTIONS:

Option 1: (Recommended)

That Council:

1. Retrospectively endorses the submission of an application under the Queensland Government's Strengthening Communities Multicultural Grants Program 2026–27,

Youth and Community Connection category, seeking $50,049 for the Multicultural Youth Documentary Project.

2. Delegates authority to the Chief Executive Officer in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2009* to finalise any and all matters relating to the application, including the execution of an associated funding agreement should Council's application be successful.

Option 2:

That Council does not retrospectively endorse the application submitted under the Queensland Government's Strengthening Communities Multicultural Grants Program 2026–27 for the Multicultural Youth Documentary Project, and request officers withdraw the application.

CONSIDERATIONS:

Risk Management:

The project involves young people creating documentary content based on their experiences of identity, culture and belonging. Risks associated with participant wellbeing, cultural safety, privacy, consent, story ownership and the public use of recorded content will be managed through the engagement of appropriately qualified facilitators, clear consent and content approval processes and project delivery that is consistent with Council's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

Council Finance and the Local Economy:

The application is for $50,049 in grant funding and proposes a contribution of $10,360 from Council's operational budget, resulting in a total project value of $60,409. Subject to grant approval, the Council operational contribution will be accommodated within the Community Life Branch budget parameters during the 2027–28 financial year. If the application is unsuccessful or funding offered is significantly reduced, the project will not proceed in its proposed form unless an alternative funding source is identified.

Community and Cultural Heritage:

The project will provide multicultural young people with opportunities to develop and share stories relating to identity, culture, belonging and community. Involving local young people, families, schools and community organisations in the documentary process and community showcase will support intercultural understanding, strengthen community connections and recognise the experiences and contributions of multicultural young people within the Cairns community.

Corporate and Operational Plans:

The project aligns with Council's Corporate Plan 2025–2030, particularly:

Focus Four – Community and Culture:

- Strategy 4.1: Position Cairns as the leading arts and cultural hub of North Australia.

- Strategy 4.2: Support diverse sport, cultural and community groups.
- Strategy 4.5: Provide spaces and programs for the benefit of the community.

Statutory:

If the application is successful, Council will be required to enter in to and comply with a funding agreement with the Queensland Government. Project delivery will also be subject to applicable legislative requirements relating to working with children, information privacy and workplace health and safety.

Policy:

The project will be delivered in accordance with Council's relevant financial management, procurement, risk management, privacy, records management and child safety and wellbeing policies and processes.

CONSULTATION:

The project has been informed by input from Trinity Bay State High School, Centacare FNQ, TAFE North Queensland and local media and film industry representatives.

ATTACHMENTS:

Nil



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Executive Manager Community Life



Tim Dendle
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