

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY SAFETY- ELECTION COMMITMENT FUNDING GRANT – RETROSPECTIVE APPLICATION FOR 2025/2028 PROGRAM

L&C | 52/8/1-01 | #7765067

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

1. Retrospectively endorse the submittal of the application for funding under the Department of Industry, Science and Resources' Strengthening Community Safety- Election Commitment Funding for the following projects:
 - a. Council Depot Security Enhancements
 - b. Community Facility Security Program for Community Organisations
 - c. Shield Street LED Lighting Upgrade
 - d. Priority CCTV Deployment
 - e. PCYC Edmonton Fencing
 - f. Pumeri Park Bollards
 - g. Independent Audit
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 above applications, including the execution of associated funding agreements should Council's application be successful.

INTERESTED PARTIES:

Department of Industry, Science and Resources (DISR)

Department of Home Affairs

PCYC Edmonton

Note: The identification of interested parties is provided on a best endeavours basis by Council Officers and may not be exhaustive.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Department of Industry, Science, and Resources recently announced the opening of the Strengthening Community Safety- Election Commitment Funding grant program. The aim of the grant is to support Councils in the purchase and installation of new or upgraded security infrastructure.

The deadline for the grant was 3 November 2025; there was not sufficient time to prepare a report to Council as the invitation to apply was received on 22 October 2025. As an election commitment, this is a non-competitive grant with no co-contribution needed from Council.

The funding will enhance community safety across the Cairns region through strategic deployment of security infrastructure at multiple high-priority locations. The program applications include securing Council depot facilities experiencing repeated break-ins, protecting community non-profit organisation facilities vulnerable to crime, upgrading Shield Street lighting to eliminate dark zones, installing bollards, and deploying CCTV cameras in high-crime areas.

These integrated initiatives will deter criminal activity, protect community assets, enhance public safety, improve surveillance capabilities supporting police investigations, and strengthen community safety across Cairns.

BACKGROUND:

Funding of \$1,500,000 was allocated to Cairns Regional Council as part of the Australian Government's 2025 Federal Election commitments. Under this program \$20.32 million is available for 20 local government entities across Australia to install new or upgraded security infrastructure, such as CCTV, lighting, fencing and bollards.

The program is being delivered by the Department of Industry, Science and Resources on behalf of the Department of Home Affairs under the Strengthening Community Safety – Election Commitment Funding grant program.

Intended outcomes of the program are to:

- contribute to enhanced community safety by promoting the responsible and positive use of public spaces;
- contribute to greater community resilience and wellbeing by addressing crime, anti-social behaviour, and other security risks; and
- help reduce the potential for fear of crime and aim to increase feelings of safety and positive community engagement more generally.

Applications were due 3 November 2025 with successful applications expected to be announced November 2025. Projects are expected to commence in January 2026 and conclude by 31 March 2028.

COMMENT:

The project being proposed for the application is Cairns Community Safety Infrastructure Program. The initiative will enhance safety across the Cairns region through targeted infrastructure upgrades. These include CCTV, lighting, bollards and fencing improvements at Council depots, community non-profit facilities, public spaces, and high-crime areas to deter criminal activity, protect assets, support police investigations, improve safety, and strengthen community confidence in public safety.

Given the short notice provided to Council to submit an application, projects were identified by officers that already had a level of detail and scoping whilst aligning strongly with the grant guidelines.

The program which has been submitted includes:

- **Council Depot Security Enhancements (\$147,000):** Install motion-activated lighting, and/or access-control systems at four Council depots (Sugarworld, Edmonton, Brinsmead, Coastwatcher) repeatedly targeted by break-ins and theft.
- **Community Facility Security Program (\$250,000):** Provide CCTV, lighting, locks, and fencing upgrades at Council-owned facilities leased to non-profit organisations vulnerable to vandalism and anti-social behaviour due to infrequent activation. Locations will be determined through an Expression of Interest process.
- **Shield Street LED Lighting Upgrade (\$250,000):** Replace outdated luminaires with LED lighting to eliminate dark zones, improve pedestrian safety, and enhance night-time visibility in the city centre.
- **Priority CCTV Deployment (\$765,000):** Install 16 fixed CCTV units and one mobile trailer unit across high-crime and high-traffic public areas, with network connectivity for live monitoring and evidence collection.
- **PCYC Edmonton Fencing (\$50,000):** Install fencing to deter continuous ingress from stolen vehicles damaging the surrounds of the facility impacting user safety and preventing unlawful access to the Walker Road Sporting Precinct.
- **Pumeri Park Bollards (\$23,000):** Install protective bollards within park to prevent unlawful vehicle access and improve park safety.
- **Independent Audit (\$15,000):** Engage an external auditor (1% of grant value) to verify compliance and program performance, as required by the grant.

Total funding amount: \$1,500,000

Advice has been received from the funding agency that should Council be successful with its application; minor variations may be accepted to scope provided there is alignment with the funding requirements and deliverability is not compromised.

OPTIONS:

Option 1 (Recommended):

That Council:

1. Retrospectively endorse the submittal of the application for funding under the Department of Industry, Science and Resources' Strengthening Community Safety-Election Commitment Funding for the following projects:
 - a. Council Depot Security Enhancements
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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 above applications, including the execution of associated funding agreements should Council's application be successful.

Option 2:

That Council does not endorse the application and officers withdraw the application for the proposed projects and forego the funding from the election commitment.

CONSIDERATIONS:

Risk Management:

There is a risk that the actual project cost may vary from anticipated costs. These risks are mitigated/managed during Council's adopted project management framework and operational management processes.

Council Finance and the Local Economy:

It is recommended that the proposed \$1.5M program is on top of the adopted capital budget as this program does not require a co-contribution from Council. Ongoing operational costs will be captured within existing budget parameters and are expected to be minimal. In some cases, the infrastructure may lead to improved operational outcomes due to assets and services being more resilient to the impacts of vandalism and anti-social activities.

Expenditure Summary				
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total
Labor	\$1,000	\$29,100	\$6,250	\$36,350
Contractors	\$125,850	\$350,800	-	\$476,650
Security Infrastructure	\$267,900	\$459,100	-	\$727,000
Independent Audit (max 1%)	-	-	\$15,000	\$15,000
Other*	-	\$82,500	\$162,500	\$ 245,000
Total	\$394,750	\$921,500	\$183,750	\$ 1,500,000

*The "Other" costs are for the Community Facility Security Program for Community Organisations; the breakdown will be determined upon the completion of the EOI to the Go Clubs not for profit network.

Community and Cultural Heritage:

Cairns Regional Council, along with the Cairns community, have felt the affects of an increase in crime in our local government area. When Council is the victim of vandalism or property damage, there is an unplanned budget impact. The projects proposed to be funded in this program directly respond to known safety issues in our community.

Corporate and Operational Plans:

The proposed projects contribute to Focus Three- Liveability and Focus Four- Community and Culture by enhancing the safety of community assets thus encouraging utilisation and protecting Council assets.

CONSULTATION:

Should Council be successful in obtaining grant funding, Council will undertake consultation with respective stakeholders and the community for each project in accordance with the provisions of the Funding Agreement and Council's Community Engagement Policy.

ATTACHMENTS:

Nil



Tim Dendle
Executive Manager Community Spaces



Destry Puia
Director of Lifestyle and Community