CAIRNS YOUTH CLIMATE SUMMIT

Sophie Barrett | 8/24/18-01 | #6172473

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council facilitates a Cairns Youth Climate Summit.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Cairns is fortunate to be located in a region renowned for two world heritage areas, the Great Barrier Reef and Wet Tropics, and has committed to demonstrating leadership in taking positive action on issues relating to climate and the natural environment through its key plans and policies.

Community engagement, informing the Cairns Regional Council Corporate Plan 2017-2022, identified the environment, sustainability and liveability as the three most important considerations to meet the needs of the community now and into the future, with youth having a key role to play in delivering a sustainable future.

A Cairns Youth Climate Summit has been proposed to determine youth aspirations for climate leadership and to provide input to assist in guiding Council's climate policy and actions from 2020 to 2030.

BACKGROUND:

Globally the 2019 United Nations Climate Action Summit is being held on the 23 September 2019. As part of the program a Youth Climate Summit is being held on the 21 September 2019 to provide a platform for young leaders to showcase their solutions and engage with decision makers on climate matters.

The Federal and State governments have a commitment to reduce emissions for Australia. The Federal government has committed to the Paris Agreement and has a target of 26-28% reduction in emissions on 2005 levels by 2030. Queensland’s aim is to have 50% emission reduction by 2030 and zero net emissions by 2050.

Council has a 50% emissions reduction target on 2007/8 levels by the end of 2019/20 and is on track to meet this goal. Council is in the initial stages of working on options for a new target and policy for 2030 in this area.
COMMENT:

A proposal has been developed to facilitate a Cairns Youth Climate Summit.

The objective of the summit is for Council to engage with students to:
* Determine youth community aspirations for climate leadership; and
* Obtain input to help guide Council’s climate policy and actions from 2020 – 2030.

It is expected that the summit will provide the following benefits to students:
* Provide a platform for youth to express their aspirations for positive action on climate change – address their concerns, hear ideas and instil hope;
* Contribute to positive action at a local scale while aligning with global initiatives such as the UN Youth Climate Summit;
* Engage with Council, university and industry experts on climate and emissions reduction; and
* Develop future climate leaders.

Local high schools in the Cairns region will be engaged through a whole of school survey, followed by a one-day workshop, attended by two student representatives from each school. This will include expert presentations and student focus groups on key climate issues.

An evening panel session will follow the workshop, with students provided with the opportunity to showcase the outcomes of the workshop to Council, community and industry representatives. It is proposed this event will include a guest speaker or similar special event (ie. movie screening).

A facilitator will be engaged to develop a dynamic program for the workshop and panel session.

OPTIONS:

Council has the option to:
1. Proceed with facilitating a Cairns Youth Climate Summit; or
2. Not proceed with a Cairns Youth Climate Summit.

CONSIDERATIONS:

Risk Management:

An initial risk assessment has been prepared as part of the project proposal and will be finalised as part of the project plan.

Council Finance and the Local Economy:

The project will be included in the Planning and Environment department budget and funded through operational budget savings.
Community and Cultural Heritage:

The 2016 the ‘Our Cairns’ community engagement identified the environment, sustainability and liveability as the top three most important considerations to meet the community’s needs now and into the future. Making the most of renewable energy was considered the second most important complex question for Council to address.

Natural Environment:

The Cairns 2050 shared vision identifies that the preservation and effective management of the Great Barrier Reef and the Wet Tropics World Heritage areas must be recognised as a strategic priority of national and global importance if their significant social, community and economic benefits are to be secured for future generations.

Corporate and Operational Plans:

The Cairns Youth Climate Summit advances the purpose and vision of the Cairns Regional Council Corporate Plan 2017-2022. In particular, it advances the objectives under the Natural Assets, Liveability and Serving the Community strategic goals.

Policy:

Council’s approach to community engagement is set out under the Community Engagement Policy. The policy is based on the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2). The public participation goal for the summit is collaboration.

Council has an Energy and Emissions Management Policy which is currently being reviewed. The outcomes of the proposed Cairns Youth Climate Summit will help contribute to this review.

CONSULTATION:

Internal engagement has been undertaken with staff in the areas of climate and sustainability to develop the project proposal. As part of the project planning for The Summit, the Department of Education and Catholic Education will be consulted as well as the Local Government Association of Queensland.
ATTACHMENTS:

Nil

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