



Date: Wednesday, 23 January 2019
Time: 9.00 am
Location: Administration Centre
10 Furneaux Street
Cooktown

AGENDA AND BUSINESS PAPERS
Late Reports
Ordinary Council Meeting
23 January 2019

Linda Cardew
Chief Executive Officer

Order Of Business

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14 CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES - REPORTS

14.4 ESTABLISHMENT OF A COOKTOWN PCYC EMERGENCY CADET PROGRAM

File Number:	D19/588
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Attachments:	Nil

WPRECIS

The Cooktown branch of the Queensland Police-Citizens Youth Welfare Association (PCYC) proposes to establish an Emergency Cadets Program (the Program) in Cooktown. The Emergency Cadets Program would involve the establishment of a collaborative relationship between the PCYC, Cooktown State Emergency Service and Cook Shire Council. The purpose of this report is to recommend that Council enters into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the abovenamed organisations to establish a mutually beneficial working relationship to enable the roll-out of the initiative in Cooktown.

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

The PCYC Emergency Cadets Program is an initiative that aims to build community resilience by fostering the development of the next generation of emergency services personnel. The Program uses a multi-faceted approach to youth engagement that endeavours to:

- Instil an ethos of volunteerism in young people;
- Develop disaster preparedness, preparation, response and recovery knowledge and skills;
- Encourage young people to envision and transition into professional and volunteering roles as young adults; and
- Support authentic leadership development to promote the services of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) within Queensland communities.

The Emergency Cadets Program was established in 2013 in a partnership between QFES and PCYC Queensland, supported by the Queensland State Government. The Cadet Program has been a catalyst for industry change and has seen a positive shift in the perception of young people through their involvement in the emergency services sector. The Cadet Program is underpinned by a belief that young people are a key to future community strength and fosters both cross-agency collaboration and inter-generational cooperation.

In the last financial year, 504 cadets across Queensland worked on 134 specific volunteering project, contributing over 7,500 hours to their communities. They were supported by 123 adult leaders, providing in excess of 19,000 hours of cadet training. The Cadet Program is open to both male and female participants and female membership grew 6% in 2017-18 to 39%. Feedback indicates that young female Cadets see the program as an opportunity to enhance skills and leadership and build a sense of belonging, and it provides an opportunity to connect with strong women as leaders and role models.

The Cadet Program encourages community involvement in determining the way it is rolled out in specific localities to ensure a strong sense of ownership, which has resulted in improved volunteer retention amongst the agencies involved in the program.

Anecdotally, as a result of their involvement in the Cadet Program, young people are engaging more with families, education and are having high success rates in gaining employment. Adolescent depression, self-harming behaviours and other indicators of mental ill health and disconnection from community have decreased. Cadets report a sense of belonging, purpose and value within the sector. Many cadets have graduated to join one of the Emergency Services in their local area.

The volunteer Adult Leaders are the backbone of the program and the anecdotal impact of engagement with the Cadet Program for Adult Leaders includes increased confidence and self-pride; an enhanced sense of purpose and belonging; decreased instances and levels of depression and reliance on mood altering medications; a return to or uptake of volunteer positions within the emergency services and a career change into the youth welfare sector.

There is a flow-on effect from the training, leadership development, volunteering ethos and life skills fostered in the Cadets, which is transferred to their families, friends, school and work.

Cadets are offered the opportunity to participate in the PCYC's Queensland State Youth Leadership Program. This Program is a week-long sequential, adventure-based program that takes place in the Gold Coast Hinterland. Cadets are able to apply for the Program as part of the in-kind commitment by PCYC Queensland to youth development. To date, 47 cadets have participated in the Program. Cadets are also encouraged to undertake a Certificate II in Public Safety, under a Memorandum of Understanding between PCYC Queensland and QFES.

A small number of Cadets have also participated in the PCYC's Emerging Leaders Program. This is the highest level learning experience offered through PCYC Queensland's suite of youth development programs. Participants in the 2017 program completed a trek along the Kokoda Track in Papua New Guinea.

During the winter school holidays each year, Cadets participate in the Cadet Games in Brisbane, which aims to develop teamwork and leadership skills and foster camaraderie.

There are currently 14 Emergency Cadet Programs in Queensland, at the following locations: Biggenden, Bowen, Childers, Cooroora, Hervey Bay, Hughenden, Inglewood, Mackay, Redland City, St Lawrence, Tara, Toowoomba, Torres Shire and Wolffdene.

PROPOSED MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN QUEENSLAND POLICE-CITIZENS YOUTH WELFARE ASSOCIATION, COOKTOWN STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE AND COOK SHIRE COUNCIL

The Cooktown branch of PCYC Queensland has approached Council with a view to establishing an Emergency Cadets Program in Cooktown.

The Program has the following identified Goals and Objectives:

1. To create a partnership to establish and maintain an Emergency Services Cadets Unit in Cook Shire.
2. To develop an opportunity for the young people of Cook Shire to access community-based training and mentoring.
3. To develop a conduit for young people to transition from being a Cadet to joining an Emergency Service as an adult volunteer or Recruit.

4. To develop a platform of sharing resources and the expertise from all parties to develop new opportunities for raising skills, providing better support to our communities and fostering the next generation of Emergency Services volunteers and personnel.

By participating in the Program, Council will be required to:

- Allow volunteer Adult Leaders, Cadets, parents, supporting Emergency Services personnel and PCYC personnel access to the premises at 32 Charlotte Street, Cooktown Queensland 4895.
- Support the building of a strong and productive relationship between the PCYC, Cooktown SES and Cook Shire Council
- Occupy one chair on the Local Cadet Advisory Committee (to meet three times annually).

Should Council approve Cook Shire Council's involvement in the Program, Councillors will need to determine who will occupy a chair on the Local Cadet Advisory Committee.

The Cooktown SES and PCYC will provide the necessary training to develop the skills of Cadets and Adult Leaders to ensure the goals and objectives of the Program are delivered. Cooktown SES will provide Cadets with Certificate II in Public Safety training, as resources permit.

The PCYC commits to providing a Program Manager and Program Coordinator to support the development of the Program. A volunteer Local Cadet Coordinator and Deputy Coordinator will be appointed from within the community.

LINK TO CORPORATE PLAN

*Key Strategic Priority: **Community*** - A sense of common purpose, whilst retaining local diversity, with goals and aspirations of individual communities reflected in local strategy and planning.

Strategy 1: Develop community specific strategies that reflect the goals and aspirations of individual communities.

Objective 1b: Establish and prioritise localised requirements, throughout the Shire for community facilities and services that include sports, library, child care and aged care.

Strategy 3: Encourage the building of strong partnerships with community, private sector and government so as to build community capacity and develop strategies to encourage and support leadership and self-responsibility in the community.

Objective 3a: Opportunities and partners are identified to advance services and facilities for all Shire communities through increased community capacity, leadership and self-responsibility.

CONSULTATION

There has been consultation with Council's Deputy Mayor, Cr Robyn Holmes; Chief Executive Officer, Ms Linda Cardew; Director Community, Economy and Innovation, Mr Lawrence Booth and Cooktown PCYC Branch Manager, Mr Howard Pratt. All of these officers are supportive of the establishment of an Emergency Cadet Program in Cooktown, given the potential positive benefits to the youth in the region and the community more broadly.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, BASIS, LEGAL RISKS)

The Program will be delivered by entering into an MOU between PCYC, Council and the local SES. The MOU is not intended to be a legally binding agreement between the parties and, therefore, represents an acceptable level of risk to Council.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no identified Policy implications for Council entering into the MOU.

FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (BUDGETARY)

The MOU states that the Emergency Services Cadets Program will be funded by QFES. Funds will be managed in accordance with the Service Agreement and will remain the sole responsibility of the PCYC for the duration of the funding agreement.

On this basis, the financial and resource implications for Council of supporting the program are assessed to be minor.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Cook Shire Council enters into a Memorandum of Understanding with Cooktown State Emergency Services; Queensland Fire and Emergency Services – State Emergency Services and the Queensland Police-Citizens Welfare Association to deliver an Emergency Services Cadets Program in Cook Shire; and

THAT Council nominates a Councillor to take up one chair on the Local Cadet Advisory Committee; and

THAT, pursuant to s.257 of the Local Government Act, Council delegates authority to the Chief Executive Officer to sign the Memorandum of Understanding and correspond with the Queensland Police-Citizens Welfare Association on behalf of Council.