

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION - [NOM-CR M ARMSTRONG] PROVISION OF COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL SERVICES

Background

Greater Tweed Heads (incorporating Banora Point, Terranora, Bilambil, Bilambil Heights, Piggabeen, and in the future, Cobaki) is the largest centralised population base in the Tweed Shire.

At present there is significant room for improvement in the provision of cultural and community facilities in this area.

Community Services - the need

As a community we are well aware of the need to provide assistance for the less fortunate. Tweed Shire has a statistically significant rate of homelessness and people at risk of becoming homeless. While services such as the Salvation Army are providing services, the Council also has a role in providing assistance. Furthermore with a statistically significant proportion of recipients of disability, carers, and aged pensions, it is important that as community facilities are developed and provided to ensure that the needs of the community are met.

Council's ability to provide capacity to assist in the provisions of these services, through the provision of facilities from which such services can be provided, has recently been demonstrated through the opening of the Murwillumbah Community Centre at Knox Park. This facility has provided a base for many such services to be able to engage with and assist local disadvantaged and marginalised people as well as the broader community. Unfortunately, while such a centre admirably assists in Murwillumbah, it does not provide services into Greater Tweed Heads.

The need remains for a genuine Community Centre from which Community Service organisations and departments are able to engage with the Greater Tweed Heads Community.

Cultural Services - The Need

Council currently provides a library, Museum, and auditorium in Greater Tweed Heads. None of these facilities are currently adequate to meeting existing demand. The library is of insufficient size. The current Museum, situated at Kennedy Drive, is remote from other commercial and tourist facilities, has significant difficulties arising from the poor state of the current building housing the collection, and is constrained from further development and/or expansion.

Similarly the current auditorium is inadequate to meet the needs of the community. In its most recent report into the state of the Tweed Civic Centre Auditorium it was determined that the current facilities are aged, are too small to house many potential community and professional hirers and productions, and is assessed by the industry as little more than a multi-use community hall; neither an auditorium or theatre. (Tweed Shire Council *Auditoria Business Plan (Murwillumbah and Tweed Civic & Cultural Centres) 2010-2012*). In comparison to the facilities provided by other like

Local Government Authorities (such as Bathurst, Orange, Tamworth, Lismore, Port Macquarie, Cessnock) which generally have modern, equipped, theatre and/or conference facilities, Tweed Shire Council has no comparable facilities at all. Furthermore, given the proximity to the Gold Coast (Gold Coast Performing Arts Centre) and the various facilities in Brisbane, while there is demand for such cultural facilities, Council facilities are insufficient to meet demand and so residents are travelling out of the shire to attend cultural events.

Accordingly there is a significant need for improved facilities in Greater Tweed Heads given the generally inadequate nature of the current facilities.

The Opportunity

Council is in a position to be able to develop long term plans for the development and provision of both cultural and community facilities for Tweed Heads. Given the capacity for population growth in the Tweed Shire, and in particular Greater Tweed Heads and the Tweed Coast, Council has an opportunity now to ensure that the provision of cultural and community facilities remains adequate even upon the completion of current significant development.

The time for development of future plans for such facilities should be concurrent with assessing the capacity for residential developments. However, the provision of cultural and community facilities has not kept pace either with historical population growth or with current growth forecasts. Upon this basis it is time to commence the assessment of the current and future demand for Council provided cultural and community facilities.

However, while it is necessary for Council to consider what cultural and community facilities are need, it is also necessary to keep in mind the lessons learned from other Local Government Authorities. The experiences arising from the development of the Glasshouse at Port Macquarie, and the long term financial impact on both that Council and community provide a pertinent demonstration of the need to limit the goals and expectation arising from such developments and the advantages of staged, economically and socially responsible plans reflecting the current and future needs of the community.