

# MEDIA RELEASE

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21 JULY 2009

## Community participation, engagement and support in Budget

Townsville City Council will roll out a range of activities, services and grants this year to encourage community participation, well-being and support.

In this year's City Budget, council is funding programs for families, women, seniors, young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and people with disabilities.

On a strategic level, it has also allocated money to social planning, cultural development, neighbourhood development, sport and recreation, and community grants.

Lifestyle and Community Development Committee chair Cr Jenny Lane said council recognised many families were doing it tough in the current economic climate.

"Particular sectors of our community are under a great deal of pressure and we've all had to tighten our belt," Cr Lane said.

"At the same time, we realise that people need our support, so we've streamlined the community grants process to eliminate duplication and maintain funding, without increased costs for ratepayers.

"We'll spend in excess of \$2 million funding community groups, with \$1 million going to 28 nominated organisations, and the remainder being allocated during the year through our regular applications process."

**Families:** Council will develop a Families Action Plan in collaboration with the community and State/Federal Governments at a cost of \$10,250. The Early Years Information Service, identified as a best-practice model for providing coordinated information to parents, will continue to be operated by council with a \$300,000 grant from the Federal Government's Communities for Children and support from the State. The Council will also continue to operate the Worinda Occasional Care Centre at Vincent.

**Women:** A total \$22,250 will go to providing a Child Care Options Handbook for Townsville, women's forums and an action plan.

**Seniors:** Seniors will be encouraged to get out and about with the Active & Healthy Seniors Program, which offers low-cost 'come and try' exercise options, such as golfing, barramundi fishing and exercise classes. They'll also be offered wellness seminars to promote healthy and active lifestyles, including the prevention of falls and how to achieve fulfilment in the greater years of independent living. Council will also host its annual seniors events, such as the Pioneers Lunch, Seniors Picnic and Seniors Music Day on Maggie.

**Young People:** Youth programs will receive \$236,000, including funds for hosting school holiday activities, National Youth Week events, youth council programs, launch of the Riverway Skate Park, outreach programs and the development of a youth action plan.

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**Cultural Diversity:** Council is funding cultural diversity initiatives with an allocation of \$82,490, including State support of \$40,000. Signage at council service points and venues will be translated into various languages, and the council will formulate a Multicultural Action Plan in consultation with the community and State/Federal governments. It will continue to celebrate cultural diversity with Harmony Day and monthly citizenship ceremonies.

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders:** Activities will be supported with \$131,500, including an Elders Dinner during NAIDOC Week, an Elders Yarnin' Circle, a sports carnival, indigenous youth forum and an indigenous component to council's popular program, Generation Chat, which takes seniors as speakers into the community. Council will also facilitate partnerships to help develop significant occasions such as the Coming of the Light, NAIDOC Week, Sorry Day and Mabo Day.

**Improving Access & Equity:** Funds will be spent on developing a dedicated access map and guide. The publication will detail accessible businesses, public spaces, services and parking for people with mobility issues. In addition, council will update its Disability Action Plan in collaboration with the community and State/Federal Governments. Council will also organise the Disability Action Week Awards, develop a speakers' panel to raise awareness about inclusion, and continue delivering services through the federally-funded Inclusion Support Agency and State funded Regional Schools Therapy Service.

**Neighbourhood development:** Council will continue its partnership with the State Government in community renewal efforts at Vincent. The Vincent Family Support Network, funded with \$106,000 from the State, supports families by providing information, connecting them with community services, and linking with other agencies. Through this program council employs a community worker based at Vincent State School and the Worinda Occasional Care Centre. The neighbourhood development budget of \$83,00 allocation also includes council's Graffiti Management Program and its Time Out Program, which provides social activities at council's community centres.

**Cultural/social highlights:** Council will support cultural endeavours by organising next year's Townsville Arts Awards and it will develop a cultural plan to give clear direction as to what future cultural facilities and activities the city needs (\$36,500). It will also spend \$25,250 on a community infrastructure study to determine the need for future community facilities, and developing the city's ongoing social atlas - a web-based tool that documents Townsville's demographic changes.

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