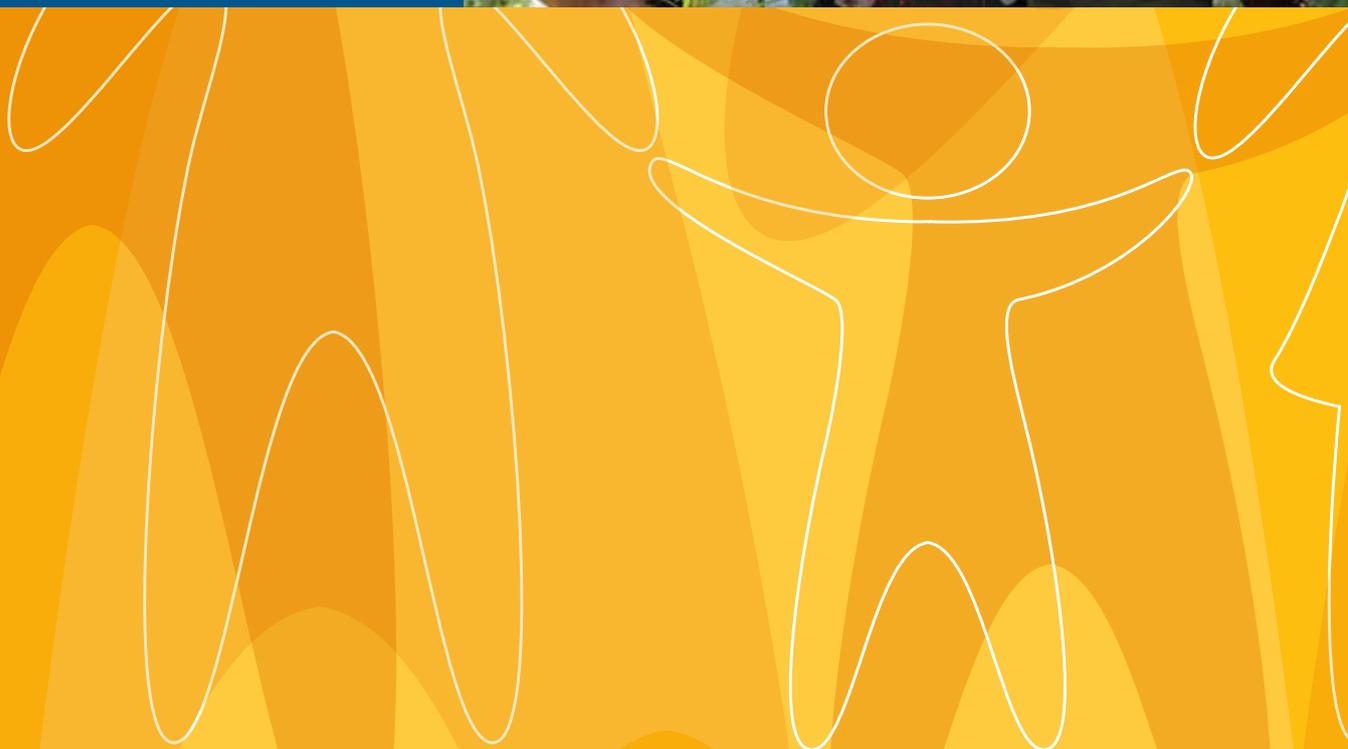




TOWNSVILLE CITY COUNCIL

FAMILY CHARTER

2014/15





Introduction

The Townsville City Council Family Charter acknowledges the significance of families in creating a strong and healthy community.

The concept of the Family Charter arose from a need for broader recognition of the roles and contributions of families in our community. The Townsville City Council consulted the community in developing this Charter, providing opportunities for input into the drafting of the Values Statements.

The Mayor and Council support the view that the Charters' guiding principles will strengthen the Council's commitment to families in the community.

Trends across Australia demonstrate that families are increasingly diverse. They are affected by changing social and economic factors such as education and employment patterns, economic circumstances,

migration and changes in gender roles. Families are in a process of continual evolution, changing to meet the needs of the individuals within, and also reflecting the society in which they live.¹

The Charter reinforces Townsville City Council's focus on families through the public endorsement of clear principles and values that it will strive to meet. It also reflects the ongoing commitment to existing family focused programs such as library services, child care and family support services, playground and park facilities, aged care services and cultural programs.

Families are a celebration of life. The Charter aims to represent families in all their forms. Our indigenous families are recognised, along with our multicultural families. The document is intentionally broad in scope, to ensure inclusion of families from a wide range of backgrounds. Every person has the right to define their family according to their own beliefs, values, lifestyle and circumstance.



Charter purpose

The Townsville City Council Family Charter provides a set of foundation statements which underpin the Council's role with regard to families and family life in Townsville.

Vision

As human beings we are dependent on each other. As a community, we are dependent upon the strength of our families.

Our vision for Townsville is to be a strong community built by strong families.



Council's role with families

Council endorses and adopts the following four principles to guide its support for families:

Principle 1

Townsville City Council will act to ensure that access, equity, quality and participation underpin its efforts in relation to families.

Principle 2

Townsville City Council will work in partnership with other spheres of government, community organisations and the private sector at the local, regional, state and national level to meet the needs of families.

Principle 3

Townsville City Council is committed to working in partnership with families in the local community to define and respond to the needs of families and determine future directions.

Principle 4

Townsville City Council adopts a holistic view of the community, linking related physical, environmental, economic, social and cultural issues.²

In adopting the above, Townsville City Council is supporting the key principles developed by the Australian Local Government Association which underlie the role of local government with respect to families and through the Integrated Local Area Planning strategy. This promotes the adoption of a 'whole of government, whole of Council, whole of community' approach.





Values statements on families

The Townsville City Council adopts a holistic approach to families, recognising that families are subject to multiple influences and may need support in many different ways. The values adopted by Townsville City Council revolve around:

The Uniqueness Of Families

Every family is unique. Identification with or as part of a family is a fundamental right of every person in our community. Respect for the individualism of families is a key communal responsibility.

Townsville City Council is committed to:

- » Conduction community programs and activities that are respectful of the diversity of family structure and backgrounds
- » Supporting community initiatives that recognise the individualism of families
- » Advocation for families and their social, environmental and economic needs at the state and commonwealth spheres

The Value Of Families

Families hold a distinctive position within society as the fundamental building blocks of a community. Strong and supported families preserve the foundations for our community to remain resilient and healthy.

Townsville City Council is committed to:

- » Providing community support services for residents of all ages, focusing on section of the community with identifies and/or special needs
- » Planning for, developing and promoting a healthy ad safe city
- » Supporting community initiatives that promote a supportive, healthy and safe city

The Inclusion Of Families

It is essential to enable families to participate in all aspects of community building. Families that are provided with meaningful opportunities to have input into decision-making processes contribute to the strength of our community.

Townsville City Council is committed to:

- » Providing opportunities for families to participate in Council's community planning activities
- » Consulting with the community to identify the ongoing needs of families
- » Undertaking social and infrastructure planning activities across Council to ensure responses to family needs are relevant

The Diversity Of Families

Diverse families enrich our community. Affirmation of differences in structure, culture and needs provide the ongoing opportunity to learn appreciation and acceptance, and the responsibility to provide resources equitably.

Townsville City Council is committed to:

- » Conduction and supporting community programs and activities that are respectful of the diversity of family structure and backgrounds
- » Providing opportunities for families to participate in Council's community planning activities
- » Partnering with key individuals and organisations to promote diversity





The Importance Of Nurturing By Families

Families shape future generations, fostering the values that are reflected in our community. Encouraging a community that provides an environment for growth through information, education and role modeling will assist families to undertake their responsibility.

Townsville City Council is committed to:

- » Planning for, developing and promoting a healthy and safe city
- » Undertaking educational activities to promote the value of community diversity
- » Advocation for families and their social, environment and economic needs at state and commonwealth spheres

The Economic Importance Of Families

Families are fundamental contributors to our local economy. Supporting and providing opportunities for families to strengthen their financial capacity will add to the depth of the local economy.

Townsville City Council is committed to:

- » Undertaking social and infrastructure planning activities across Council to ensure responses to family needs are relevant
- » Developing and maintaining respectful and ethical family friendly employment practices
- » Advocating for families and their social, environmental and economic needs at state and commonwealth spheres



The Importance Of Connected Families

Cohesive and connected families provide a solid foundation for a safe and supported community. Providing avenues for people to strengthen the bonds withing their families will also strengthen their connection to the community.

Townsville City Council is committed to:

- » Planning for, developing and promoting a healthy ad save city
- » Undertaking education activities to promote the value of community diversity
- » Providing arts and cultural programs, activities and infrastructure to encourage and maintain family participation

The Need To Support Families

At times, families may need additional support to deal with life's stresses and to improve connections with the community. A strong community will develop the capacity to respond to the changing needs of families and their members and affirm their achievements.

Townsville Cit Council is committed to:

- » Providing community support services for residents of all ages, focusing on sections of the community with identified and/or special needs
- » Playing a leadership role in the community through:
 1. Best practice approaches to service delivery
 2. Consultation and feedback processes on services
 3. Enabling family participation in program development
- » Supporting community initiatives that respond to recognised needs of families
- » Partnering with key individuals and organisations to develop and implement support strategies within the community



The Importance Of Families Spending Time Together

The ability to spend time together is crucial for ongoing family strength and connection. Facilitation events and providing infrastructure that are accessible to all community members will ensure families have the chance to take advantage of the time they have together.

Townsville City Council is committed to:

- » Providing cultural and recreation programs, activities and infrastructure to encourage and maintain family participation
- » Presenting inclusive and family focused celebratory events to maximize community involvement
- » Developing initiatives at a neighborhood level to strengthen localised community bonds



The Sharing Of Responsibility

Families are our community. Families share a mutual responsibility as citizens to partner with council and each other to create a supportive and connected community.

Townsville City Council is committed to:

- » Developing community initiatives at a neighborhood level to strengthen localised bonds
- » Providing opportunities for families to participate in Council's community planning activities
- » Consulting with the community to identify the ongoing needs of families
- » Partnering with key individuals and organisations to develop and implement citizenship strategies

The Celebration Of Families

Celebrations which acknowledge the contributions of families to our community provide public recognition and confirmation of their vital role. Occasions for celebration at a street, neighbourhood or community level will enhance families' pride in themselves and our community.

Townsville City Council is committed to:

- » Presenting inclusive an free family focused celebratory events to maximize community involvement
- » Developing community initiatives at a neighbourhood level to strengthen localised community bonds
- » Supporting community organised events that recognise and promote the contribution of families



Values into actions

The value statements above should not be viewed as separate or disconnected concepts. They are interrelated and interdependent, relying on a mutual long-term commitment between Council and community to ensure the intent is sustained and outcomes achievable. Therefore the actions listed under the statement may be found under one or more categories.



Acknowledgments And References

Townsville City Council would like to thank the many family members who have contributed to the development of this Charter, from filling out questionnaires to nonparticipating in focus groups, from Advisory Group members to Community Leaders.

1. Weston, R. Stanton, D. Lixia, Q. and Soriano, G. (2001), "Australian Families in Transition", Family Matters, No. 60, Spring/Summer 2001, pp 12-2, Australian Institute of Family Studies.
2. Australian Local Government Association (1998), Local Government and Families in the Community - A guide and action plan for Local Governments, pp 14-15, Australian Local Government Association, ACT.



Charter Signatories

We, the undersigned, support the principles and values outlined in the Townsville City Council Family Charter. We further commit to working with Council to achieve the outcomes and continue to develop a strong, connected and diverse community.

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Mayor of the City of Townsville

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Councillor Sue Blom

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Magnetic Island Community Development
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