

11.3 Community Services - Quarterly Report

REPORT BY THE MANAGER, COMMUNITY & CULTURAL SERVICES
TO 17 AUGUST 2022 ORDINARY MEETING
GOV400098, COS300010

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. **receive the report by the Manager, Community & Cultural Services on the Community Services - Quarterly Report; and**
2. **note the recent services provided and activities coordinated by Council's Community Services Department.**

Executive summary

The aim of this report is to familiarise Council with the services and activities coordinated by Council's Community Services Department and to inform it of any issues and event of note that arose during the period 1 April 2022 to 30 June 2022.

Disclosure of Interest

Nil

Detailed report

Details of Community Services' quarterly activities, events, milestones and points of interest are contained within the attachment to this report. Of particular interest:

- Community Development Officers rolled out positive activities to acknowledge National Sorry Day and Reconciliation Week;
- Eight 'Get Ready Community Interactive workshops' focusing on community preparedness and building capability and resilience, reducing will be rolled out in August across the region;
- Community Transport trip statistics are beginning to improve as more services and opportunities open up following the global pandemic;
- There continues to be a need for quality educators across the region to host Family Day Care Services as waitlists for early childhood education and care grow.

Community Plan implications

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|--------------|--|
| Theme | Looking After Our Community |
| Goal | A safe and healthy community |
| Strategy | Maintain the provision of high quality, accessible community services that meet the needs of our community |

Strategic implications

Council Strategies
Not Applicable

Council Policies

Not Applicable

Legislation

Not Applicable

Financial implications

Not Applicable

Associated Risks

Not Applicable

FIONA SHEARMAN
MANAGER, COMMUNITY & CULTURAL
SERVICES

SIMON JONES
DIRECTOR COMMUNITY

25 July 2022

Attachments: 1. Community Services - April to June 2022.

APPROVED FOR SUBMISSION:

BRAD CAM
GENERAL MANAGER

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Monthly Interagency meetings have continued throughout the year with good attendance and feedback from agencies regarding sharing information and networking.

Issues discussed included Centrelink payments, continuing COVID-19 issues affecting service delivery and the ability to work, the continuing effects of the Black Summer bush fires and recent floods.

Local housing remains a major topic of discussion, particularly as rental rises in Mudgee have precipitated rises in all the villages as well. Accommodation options are hampered by the increasing demand for additional AirBnB style accommodation with approximately 471 properties currently listed in the region. This has been reflected in an increase in services' clients presenting with lease terminations/no options to renew rental agreements. The so called recent 'property boom' and need for accommodation for visiting contractors are also contributing to this stress.

Planning for this year's Rylstone Family Fun Day has commenced and information is being shared on the LifeSkills Plus programs and other outreach services being delivered in Rylstone and Kandos.

Community Development Officers delivered two Interagency Information Sessions in April on problematic gambling (particularly youth gambling) and domestic violence.

Community Development Officers coordinated a Sorry Day event in Mudgee on 26 May with a group of local Indigenous and non-Indigenous people meeting in Mudgee to watch a film on the background to Sorry Day. The following day marked the beginning of Reconciliation Week and an outing to Drayton's Valley Reserve was arranged for a smoking ceremony, a short walk (looking for artefacts and hand stencils) and then a discussion about plans for the reserve now that its management has been handed over to NEWCO (North East Wiradjuri Company).

There was also discussion about Wirimbili-yanhi Wiradjuri walan, the Indigenous culinary and medicinal plants community garden being developed next to the NEWCO building in Kandos. This project was initiated and supported by the Community Development Team.

Community Development staff participated on online Mudgee Child and Family Network Meetings to supply and share information and services, provide a voice for implementing programs, services and events to target early intervention initiatives. The meetings for the quarter have been attended by a number of stakeholders including Council, early childhood education and care providers, an NDIS service provider and Community Health.

The New South Wales Seniors Week Festival 2022 was celebrated from 25 March to 3 April. The Planning Committee organised lunches at Gulgong, Mudgee, Rylstone and Kandos which included the presentation of the Seniors Citizen of the year Award for each town, handed out by a Council representative. The Committee also organised a Concert with morning tea, for the LGA. The Concert was very well attended by 120 seniors with excellent feedback.

Wollemi Voices continues to grow in members with its external facilitator continuing to provide singing teaching in a voluntary capacity. This activity successfully delivers an outcome of social participation under Department of Communities and Justice funding.

Official confirmation NEWCO's \$20,000 grant from the National Indigenous Australians Agency for establishment of the Wirimbili-yanhi Wirimbili walan Indigenous Plants Community Garden was received in April. Earthworks are due to commence shortly, followed by the delivery of sandstone blocks and some water tanks for catchment. A steel

garden shed has been delivered and construction of that plus a slab will be undertaken shortly.

Grant funding will be used for earthworks and setting up garden beds and a yarning circle, installing water tanks to collect water for the garden and purchasing gardening equipment and plants.

COMMUNITY RECOVERY

Determine long term resource needs for if/when another disaster occurs.

Resilience NSW plans to utilise the Mid-Western area for the pilot 'Community Resilience Network' program have been delayed due to the flooding across the state and staff requirement to deploy to areas outside of the LGA.

In May, Council's Community Recovery Officer attended Resilience NSW training in Evacuation Management and Emergency Management Centre Concepts as well as attending the Australasian Fire awareness and Community engagement Conference.

Regular feed back to the Community Recovery Officer has come from community interactions, community meetings, and events such as the Mudgee Small Farm Field days. This has included information around areas of flooding that were previously unknown, and subsequent impacts on residents. Unknown weather impacts, often do not trigger combat agency response due to the resilient nature of affected communities. In turn, the recovery phase is not activated. Resilience NSW have been made aware of this concern.

Eight 'Get Ready Community Interactive workshops' focusing on community preparedness and building capability and resilience, reducing dependence on Government services will be rolled out in August in Cooyal, Goolma, Gulgong, Wollar, Hargraves, Mudgee, Olinda and Running Stream.

The workshops are interactive and will enable communities to reconnect and build stronger relationships. The workshop agenda is based on the five simple steps of the "Get Ready" program:

1. Know your risk
2. Plan now for what you will do
3. Get your home ready
4. Be aware
5. Look out for each other.

These workshops will provide participants the opportunity to ask specific hazard and agency questions. The events will also provide emergency services an opportunity to promote and recruit within local communities.

A Running Stream community meeting was convened by Lithgow Council in June 2022. It provided the community with an opportunity to reconnect and discuss further community projects to build resilience. The event was well attended and future programs are also planned. Lithgow Council planned and delivered this event for running stream community.

Bushfire Recovery Grants are currently open and being promoted for the community led projects for not-for-profit organisations or individual applicants to support sustained economic recovery and community resilience following the 2019-2020 bushfire season. The fund is designed to support community recovery by funding projects and initiatives that will promote community well-being, social and broader recovery and future disaster resilience following the bushfires. Applications for total funding capped at \$62,000 are open until 16 September 2022.

COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

Quarterly statistics

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|--|------|
| Commonwealth Home Support Program trips | 601 |
| Community Transport Program trips | 139 |
| National Disability Insurance Scheme trips | 93 |
| Department of Veterans Affairs trips | 23 |
| Health Related Transport trips | 102 |
| Full cost recovery trips | 112 |
| Non reportable trips | 23 |
| Total | 1073 |

Unmet requests for transport: 16 (the majority being Sydney trips due to driver unavailability).

Fleet

Six vehicles comprise the Community Transport fleet. One car is currently off the road due to reaching contractual maximum odometer reading allowable. This vehicle will be replaced with an AWD vehicle which is more suitable for predominantly out of town clients living on unsealed roads and challenging driveways.

Volunteers

There are currently 19 drivers are registered for volunteering. Two were unavailable during this period for personal reasons, and one unavailable due to being on holidays. Three new volunteers have been recruited during this reporting period. Volunteer drivers completed their first aid training in May which is now mandatory for all drivers under the funding guidelines. Staff also completed first aid training.

Compliance Reporting

All mandatory and required reporting has been prepared and submitted by due dates. Compliance meetings have been conducted by Transport for NSW and no major non-compliance issues identified.

General

The majority of trips delivered are for medical appointments. Day programs at Mudgee Hospital recommenced late in the reporting period which will increase trip outputs. Trip numbers have been down for some time due to the pandemic however an increase in demand is slowing becoming evident. Social outings and promotion of services is required to increase outputs and will be implemented coming into the warmer months.

FAMILY DAY CARE

Family Day Care continues to provide education and care to the families within Mudgee, Gulgong and Kandos (also Wellington).

Educator numbers remain at twelve (6 in Mudgee, 2 in Gulgong, 1 in Kandos, and 3 in Wellington).

Our waiting list continues to grow with currently 25 families on the waiting to receive care. There is a mixture of ages but predominately under 3years. A recruitment drive for new educators has been planned for the second half of the year.

The Community Child Care Funding Sustainability Support Performance Report and Child Safety Statement of Compliance Report was submitted 30 June 2022 and was assessed as complete with no further action.

A compliance visit was conducted by the Department of Education Early Childhood Education Directorate towards the end of May 2022. Areas identified as needing action have been addressed.

The pandemic is still having a negative impact on educators and families – if an educator's household member contracts COVID, they are required to close and are unable to provide education and care to the children. This impacts educators' income as well as that of the scheme; the levies charged are generated from the hours and days each educator operates. There is pressure from families to waive the gap fee (the portion of fees that families pay) when a family member of child cannot attend care due to COVID, and this has been deemed an individual business decision for each educator. Currently this is not impacting on the Scheme because it is still able to collect its portion of the educator and administration levies.

Two of educators, Julie Crowe in Mudgee and Zoe Burn in Wellington, have been nominated in the Excellence in 2022 National Family Day Care Australia Awards. This is wonderful recognition for the education and care they provide to the children and their families. Results for Regional winners will be announced in August.

MEALS ON WHEELS

Fresh meals delivered:

April 597

May 685

June 620

TOTAL 1902

Frozen meals deliver:

April 38

May 65

June 112

TOTAL 114

34 active clients.

7 new clients and 8 exited clients.

Referrals through the My Aged Care System have been steady and many taking up the service when contacted. 3 outstanding as they do not require meals at this time.

Volunteer numbers are meeting demand for deliveries.

YOUTH SERVICES

Youth Services continued to support Youth Council to plan and deliver a program of activities for Youth Week and the April School Holidays. A range of events were held in Mudgee, Gulgong, Kandos and Rylstone, along with a popular excursion to the Dubbo Escape Room. Most activities were well attended, noting excellent engagement at skateboard workshops held at the Mudgee and Gulgong skate parks. Activities included film, virtual reality, craft, trivia, an art competition and a mail out kit to engage geographically isolated young people.

Youth Services continue to deliver their after school monthly programmes being coordinated across the region, with varying levels of engagement. Programs in Mudgee have been regularly booked out, however more engagement is being sought in the Gulgong and Kandos/Rylstone communities. Consultation with young people in these communities will continue to influence the programming offered.

The One YA Book One Community 2022 project was launched during Youth Week and concluded at the end of term 2 (late June). 120 copies of *Hometown haunts: #LoveOzYA horror tales* an anthology of Young Adult short stories by contemporary Australian authors, edited by Poppy Nwosu were purchased and distributed through the community. All four high school and the TAFE libraries were eager and pleased to continue to be involved, as well as Mid-Western Regional Council library branches. Statistics indicate approximately 150 people participated in the project.

During June, the Mid-West Music Quest was hosted by Real FM with support from the Youth Council and Youth Services. The competition was an opportunity for musicians of all ages to perform in front of a live audience, with the possibility to win prizes, including Mudgee Money and radio airplay of their song. Twenty one entrants competed in two heats, resulting in eight participants progressing to the finals. The final was held in the Town Hall Theatre in front of 130 people, with Klancie Freebody announced as the winner. The majority of entrants were in the youth demographic of 12-25 years and it was fantastic for them to be able to showcase their talent to the broader community. Funds raised from ticket sales will be used to purchase sound equipment for use by young people in the region.