

11.3 Community Services Quarterly Update - April to June 2021

REPORT BY THE MANAGER, COMMUNITY & CULTURAL SERVICES
TO 04 AUGUST 2021 ORDINARY MEETING
GOV400088, 30000

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. **receive the report by the Manager, Community & Cultural Services on the Community Services Quarterly Update - April to June 2021;**
2. **note the recent services provided and activities coordinated by Council's Community Services Department; and**
3. **place the amendment to the Community Transport fee on public exhibition for 28 days and, if no submissions are made, endorse the amended fee of \$5.00 for Zone 1 Single fee for community transport.**

Executive summary

This report aims to familiarise Council with services and activities provided by its Community Services Department and to inform it of issues and events of note that arose during the period April to June 2021 (inclusive). The report also seeks to reinstate the Zone 1 single fee (FC0226) for Mudgee Community Transport which was inadvertently reduced by 10 cents during the 2021/2022 fees and charges review.

Disclosure of Interest

Nil

Detailed report

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

- Survey responses from Mudgee Community Transport clients highlight the importance and quality of the service for the community;
- The Mid-Western Regional Family Day Care Scheme continues to seek out new Educators to assist in addressing the increasing waitlist for Family Day Care early childhood education and care in the community. The Scheme is also waiting on the outcome for two funding applications lodged with the Federal Government's Community Child Care Fund Sustainability Support program.

Staff note the Zone 1 single fee for community transport (FC0226) was initially included in the exhibited version of Council's schedules of fees and charges 2021/22, and due to an administrative error (rounding) it was exhibited as 10 cents lower than intended. Rectification is being sought by placing the amendment on public exhibition for 28 days and reinstating the intended charge of \$5.00 if no submissions are received.

Community Plan implications

Theme	Looking After Our Community
Goal	Effective and efficient delivery of infrastructure
Strategy	Provide infrastructure and services to cater for the current and future needs of our community

Strategic implications

Council Strategies

Not Applicable.

Council Policies

Not Applicable.

Legislation

The *Local Government Act* 1993 requires any change to a fee or charge after the commencement of an operational plan to go on public exhibition for at least 28 days prior to commencement.

Financial implications

Zone 1 Single fees for Mudgee Community Transport are the most common fare types over any one year. If the intended fee of \$5.00 is not reinstated, there would be a reduction in anticipated client contributions which are now utilised for the purchase of replacement vehicles for the service.

Associated Risks

Negligible.

FIONA SHEARMAN
MANAGER, COMMUNITY & CULTURAL
SERVICES

SIMON JONES
DIRECTOR COMMUNITY

8 July 2021

Attachments: 1. Community Services - Quarterly Report - April to June 2021.

APPROVED FOR SUBMISSION:

BRAD CAM
GENERAL MANAGER

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Meetings

Since March this year combined meetings (face to face and on line) for the Mudgee and Gulgong Interagency group have been held on a monthly basis.

The April Interagency meeting was attended by a large number of agencies from Mudgee as well as outreach services. The guest speakers for that meeting were Ken Lam and Karen Golland from Legal Aid NSW discussing Work and Development Orders.

The guest speaker for the May Interagency meeting was Anna Robards (Wellbeing Health In-reach Nurse (WHIN) Coordinator – in the Mudgee/Gulgong area). The purpose of Anna's role is to work in collaboration with school staff to facilitate and assist students and families in accessing the health and wellbeing services they may need to support them through their school journey.

Julie Anne Vass from Western NSW Community Legal Centre Inc was the guest speaker for the June Interagency meeting.

Local issues discussed during this quarter affecting the community services sector, and the most significant concern amongst members include the absence of mental health services and the shortage of professionals in the area including, counsellors, psychologists, psychiatrists and allied health.

Kandos and Rylstone Interagency meetings have continued via the TEAMS online platform. Issues and events discussed are the continuing post bush fire programs supporting local communities, COVID 19 impacts and continuing roll out of various NGO programs. Like Mudgee, Kandos High School now has a Wellbeing staff member; facilitating and assisting students and their families to access health and wellbeing services.

The Rylstone Family Fun Day is being arranged for the 28 September. This year's theme is 'Connect with Nature' and activities will focus on the many beautiful outdoor places and activities available to young families in the region.

Meetings also continued online and face to face for the Mudgee Child and Family Network which is a network to supply and share information on services, provide a voice for implementing programs, regarding targeted early intervention initiatives. The meetings for the quarter have been attended by representatives from Council, Mudgee Preschool, Mission Australia (NDIS), local childcare centres, and Mudgee Community Health.

Targeted Early Intervention activities

The Kandos-Rylstone Community Singing Group has continued to be popular although the colder weather initially impacted attendances. The group (now called Wollemi Singers) has moved into Kandos CWA hall for the colder months. The group has an excellent voluntary accompanist/taskmaster who retired in Kandos following many years of experience in community and church choirs in the Sydney area.

A working group has been meeting since May to develop a proposal for the Wirimbili Indigenous Plants Community Garden project. It is expected to be completed shortly. It is hoped that the project will promote cultural interactions, horticultural aspects, business development, mental health support and general community interest. The resulting Indigenous medicinal and culinary plants garden will then be utilised as part of the cultural program in the centre, as well as a community resource.

A workshop was facilitated by Council and delivered by Mudgee Aboriginal Land Council in early May with the aim of teaching the history and culture of the Local Aboriginal Community as well as how to apply Cultural Protocols for community engagement. It was attended by 28 participants, including professionals and the general public.

Events

Seniors Week 2021 was a very successful week of celebrations, including lunches in Rylstone, Kandos, Mudgee and Gulgong. Each town recognised a Senior Citizen or organisation for their contributions to their communities. A concert and morning tea was also attending by more than 100 seniors at Club Mudgee.

COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

Quarterly statistics

Commonwealth Home Support Program trips	852
Community Transport Program trips	179
National Disability Insurance Scheme trips	94
Department of Veterans Affairs trips	30
Health Related Transport trips	60
Full cost recovery trips	120
Non reportable trips	18
Total	2205

Unmet requests for transport

Twenty-four requests for transport were unmet during this quarter; two-thirds of which were due to COVID restrictions.

Vehicles

Three vehicles are approaching the 300,000km threshold and will be replaced using client contributions. This is updated advice from Transport for NSW as previously it had been instructed that funding could not be used to replace vehicles and they must be leased instead.

Volunteers

Volunteer driver numbers remain relatively steady at twenty-one.

Annual client surveys

Annual surveys have been sent to clients and results of note include:

50% of clients are referred through the Federal Government My Aged Care system.

50% of clients responding to survey indicated they would like to be involved in social outings (which will be implemented as a strategy to increase outputs and be an advantage to the wellbeing of isolated clients).

30% of clients rely on Mudgee Community Transport as their only means of transport.

50% of clients responding to the survey have conditional driver's licences and require Mudgee Community Transport for regional transportation.

Comments from the survey indicate clients are very happy and grateful to have the service available to them. All comments are of nothing but praise for the staff, volunteers, and processes in conducting the service.

COVID response

All advice and instruction from Transport for New South Wales, the State and Federal Governments are being monitored and adhered to.

CULTURAL SERVICES

The gallery underwent a brand development with Destination Marketing Store who came to Mudgee to do develop an archetype based on community and stakeholder consultation. The name 'Mudgee Arts Precinct' was selected as the name and a logo adopted for the Precinct's collateral.

Guido Maestri

Guido Maestri (formerly Guy Maestri) recently completed his body of new large-scale oil paintings ahead of Mudgee Arts Precinct's inaugural exhibition: 'Stories from Homedale'. The works have been photographed in preparation for the gallery's catalogue. Dr Lisa Slade, Assistant Director from the Art Gallery of South Australia who is a specialist in Guido's art has written the catalogue essay.

The marketing and advertising strategy is being prepared for the exhibition and preproduction for Guido Maestri's 'Making Conversations' interview and educational video content is underway.

The exhibition and building will hold an invitation-only opening for politicians, artists and stakeholders on Friday, 6 August which will be opened by the Director of the Art Gallery of NSW, Michael Brand. An Open Day for the local community is planned for the following day.

Volunteers

The Cultural Officer is developing Mudgee Arts Precinct's volunteer protocols and policy in anticipation of the Precinct opening.

Waste to Art competition and exhibition

Local category winning artists have had their works delivered to showcase at the regional Waste to Art Exhibition at Coonamble. This will open to the public on the 17 July at the Outback Arts Creative Centre.

FAMILY DAY CARE

Mid-Western Regional Family Day Care Scheme continues to provide consistent high quality education and care to families within our local community.

Educator numbers have remained steady at fifteen over the past quarter: seven Educators in Mudgee, one in Gulgong, one in Kandos and six in Wellington. Interest in becoming an Educator with the Scheme continues, with three enquiries received in the past six weeks, including one interested in commencing their service in early 2022. As always, endeavours to secure additional Educators continue.

There are currently no vacancies throughout the Scheme and the waiting list is growing (predominately with families with children under the age of two). Currently, there are 16 children waiting to commence with Family Day Care (not including those families already engaged with services and seeking additional care).

The Scheme's external funding arrangements with the Commonwealth ceased on 1 July 2021. Notification received from the Community Grants Hub in mid-June was that outcomes for the two applications for Round 3 funding under the Community Child Care Fund Sustainability Support program can be expected sometime during July.

Due to the uncertainty around grant funding going forward, the staffing structure has been adjusted with the Child Development Officer roles reverting to casual bases and a part-time administrative position being re-instated.

MEALS ON WHEELS

Meal statistics

Main meals including hot meals, chilled deserts, sandwiches and soups:

April	610
May	536
June	574
TOTAL	1720

Frozen meals including meals, baked meals:

April	58
May	24
June	35
TOTAL	117

Active clients

50 clients for meal delivery.

Four clients receiving frozen meals only on an adhoc basis.

Incoming referrals have been consistent and a small number of clients have transferred to home care packages and are no longer entitled to subsidised meals through the Commonwealth Home Support Program. Client numbers have fluctuated due to clients moving into residential care and sadly, some long-standing clients have passed away during this period.

Volunteers

Volunteer numbers are steady and cover all roster requirements. All volunteers have been trained on best methods to adhere to health orders and implementing COVID safe practices.

YOUTH SERVICES

Employment Expo

Four local businesses participated in an Employment Expo in May. The businesses gave presentations to young people (14-25 years of age) and their parents on application processes and opportunities, business culture, and new employee support. Following the presentations, the local business representatives were available to answer specific questions and provide information to young people who were potentially interested in working at their business.

Regular after school programming

Regular monthly after school programming in the Library branches continues, including Book Bouncers, Crafternoon, Manga & Anime Squad and Level Up programs.

One YA Book One Community

The latest One YA Book One Community [OYABOC] project was launched in April during Youth Week and concluded at the end of Term 2 in June. The four local high schools and TAFE libraries all agreed to partner by hosting a total of 50 copies of the novel *The Left-Handed Booksellers of London* by Garth Nix. Due to COVID-19 restrictions local businesses were not asked to host books this year, as such Mid-Western Regional Council Library branches were responsible for the remaining 100 books. Statistics obtained throughout the project indicate 315 people participated in OYABOC 2021.

School holiday and Youth Week activities

Youth Services were pleased with the overall take-up and interest in the events run over the 3 week Autumn school holidays/Youth Week period. Increased COVID restrictions, however, have had an effect on winter school holiday activities.