



DIRECTOR SHIRE SERVICES REPORT

9th October 2007

DSS4	COMMUNITY SERVICE ORDERS SCHEME
	FILE: 1027 KNS {Folio No. *}

SUMMARY:

Council has been invited to participate in the implementation of a Community Service Order Scheme (CSOS) in conjunction with the Department of Corrective Services (DCS).

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DESCRIPTION:

At the June 2007 meeting Council was advised of a proposal by the Department of Corrective Services to establish supervised teams to undertake community projects around the Shire.

A community Consultative Committee has been established by the Mid North Coast Correctional Centre. The Consultative Committee is chaired by Councillor Terry Hunt and Council is represented on the committee by Kevin Smith and Kathy Oliver. After extensive consultation with the Committee, the Department of Corrective Services (DCS) has advised that a Community Service Order Scheme has started in our area, and that it is seeking appropriate projects for inclusion in its program.

Some quotes are provided from its CSO Agency Guide dated May 2006 in order to inform Council about this program.

"Community Service is a means whereby people who have been convicted of an offence complete a penalty which involves making reparation or putting something back into the community for the harm caused by offending.

In early 2006 over 17,000 people were under community supervision- almost double the numbers of offenders in the state's prisons.

A Community Service Order (CSO) is an order made by a Court requiring a person to perform unpaid work for the community for a specified number of hours. It requires the person (offender) to make restitution to the community for their offending. They are penalised by the loss of their leisure time rather than being isolated in prison."

The scheme is only operating one day a week at the present time however the DCS is hoping to fund a full time supervisor under its

direction in the near future. This will enable work teams to be available up to five days a week.

The DCS provides transport to and from work sites, hand tools, supervision and ensures Occupational Health and Safety requirements are met. Agencies are indemnified against claims for compensation for injuries sustained by workers and against damage caused by workers.

There are a broad range of Council projects that may meet the requirements of the program. Each project will have their own job specifications and may be co-ordinated by different people within Council. Some funding support may also be required for say material purchase or collection and disposal of waste. This would be addressed on a project by project basis and could be by way of grant monies or by Council funding.

The CSOS is not intended to replace projects undertaken by Council workers. There are a reasonable number of projects that meet this criterion and during discussions at staff level it was suggested that some of the works under the Gills Bridge Creek Rehabilitation Project would meet both authorities' requirements. It is recommended to start the partnership with this project.

Council, in consultation with relevant stakeholders has prepared a Rehabilitation Plan for the Gills Bridge Creek Catchment in South Kempsey. The Gills Bridge Creek Rehabilitation Plan aims to set a framework for preserving and enhancing existing assets of the creek, such as remaining segments of riparian vegetation and native habitat, and to rehabilitate degraded assets, such as water quality and the extent of weed coverage. In doing so, the project aims to improve the ecological condition of the creek, while encouraging a Total Catchment Management (TCM) aware, involved and practising community that will be active in monitoring and enhancing the condition of the creek and surrounding environment.

Preliminary site investigations indicate that sections of Gills Bridge Creek are infested with the weed lantana and throughout the creek general household rubbish has been dumped and/or moved through the creek under high flow conditions. One of the more heavily lantana infested sections along with general dumping of rubbish occurs along the creek line between South Street bridge crossing and West End Road bridge crossing. To address these issues at this location the Community Service Order Scheme Team will be required to undertake three initial tasks:

Task 1 – Undertake a lantana eradication program:

The team will be required to use hand saws (or bush cutters) to cut the main trunk of the plant at or near the base of the trunk and then apply Roundup over the cut area of the section of the trunk remaining in the ground.

Task 2 – General household rubbish collection & stockpile:

The team will be required to manually collect all rubbish within the creek and along both sides of the creek banks and any other location within the Priority Area 1. The collected rubbish will be required to be stockpiled in a location adjacent to the bridge on West End Road.

Task 3 – Follow up herbicide application:

The team will be required to manually apply a suitable herbicide that is registered for use on or near watercourses. It is expected that a number (up to 4) follow up herbicide applications will be required.

REPORT IMPLICATIONS:

- ***Environmental***

The project will provide significant environmental improvement to a degraded area.

- ***Social***

The program should be supported by Council because of the favourable benefits that can be gained by both the community and offenders.

- ***Economic (Financial)***

Funding to remove the rubbish stockpiled at Gills Creek will be provided from within Councils budget for the project or from grant funding.

- ***Policy or Statutory***

Nil

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **That Council support the Community Service Order Scheme.**
2. **That the Gills Bridge Creek Rehabilitation Project be the first project undertaken.**

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**K N Smith
ACTING DIRECTOR SHIRE SERVICES**