



**KEMPSEY**  
Shire Council

## **DIRECTOR CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES REPORT**

16<sup>th</sup> January 2007

|              |                             |
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| <b>DCCS6</b> | <b>KEMPSEY CROCFESTIVAL</b> |
|              | <b>FILE: 689 GJH</b>        |

### **SUMMARY:**

Reporting on the success of Crocfest 2006, and the subsequent request for funding from Kempsey Shire Council to assist with staging of Kempsey Crocfest 2007.

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### **Crocfest 2006**

The Crocfest 2006 festival was held over two (2) days and nights on 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> September at the Verge Street sportsfields.

Kempsey Shire played host to up to 6,800 students, 550 support staff and facilitators, and over 10,000 community members attended with an atmosphere that was positive and binding.

There was a higher level of publicity & promotion this year raising the profile of the Kempsey Community, Kempsey Shire Council and the many festival partners. Kempsey Shire Council received confirmation of their nomination for the "Regional Communities Award" for the 2005 Crocfest event but was unsuccessful as a finalist.

The broad aims of the festivals are to foster and encourage education, health, the Arts, employment and engaging the community in strengthening relationships in a spirit of reconciliation. The specific aims include increasing general education, social skills, to show young people that a healthy lifestyle requires positive choices and personal decision and to increase the awareness of employment opportunities.

The festival introduces a 'holistic' approach to addressing regional-specific youth concerns. Health, sport, arts, cultural, goal-setting, education, careers workshops and festival performances promote youth identity to the wider community.

Teacher's questionnaires are conducted at each festival to determine whether the festival aims are being achieved.

Reported outcomes have included the following:

- Improved attitude by students towards school;
- Improved ability to accept responsibility and be tolerant of others;
- Increased sense of purpose, self esteem, self confidence and pride;
- Increased school attendance levels;

- Improved literacy and numeracy skills;
- More community involvement with the school;
- Improved understanding of and respect for traditional and contemporary Indigenous culture by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students;
- An increased awareness of the need to stay at school and of employment opportunities;
- Increased awareness of the issues associated with tobacco, alcohol and other drugs, nutrition, cleanliness, mental health and depression;
- Stronger family and community involvement in preparing for the festivals;
- Increased tolerance of other students;
- Improved relationships between the students and the community;

In 2006 alone the Croc Festival organisation spent approximately \$168,000 within Kempsey. Local accommodation services recorded up to 90-100% occupancy totally attributed to festival attendees. Local food outlets had major increases in sales with MacDonald's recording huge increases of up to 25.25 percent on a month that was already down on some days by over 21%. Other food outlets indicate similar figures. Estimates are still being done but already we can see a huge increase in economic growth for the Kempsey Shire. Local businesses benefited with over \$51,000 spent by Indigenous Festivals Australia on catering for students, facilitators and crew. Local workers were also employed for the setting up and pulling down of the festival.

Local businesses engaged by Croc Festival organisers include accommodation, equipment hire, staff wages, production costs, services, transport, travel and venue hire, and artists.

The Croc Festival encourages career pathways to promote a more skilled generation of young people who will become the labour force and generate future economic activity in the surrounding region.

This year over \$24,000 was spent by the Croc Festival organisation to employ local and state performing and visual artists, Indigenous artists and teachers for the festival activity sessions during the day. The programming of activities was carried out in consultation with engaged arts organisations, indigenous organisations as well as event officers at the Council. In this way the Croc Festival actively invested in the development of the arts community and assisted in raising the awareness of arts and culture throughout the region.

The festival brought together a cross-section of agencies in the region, encouraging greater awareness and cooperation of activities, encouraging potential synergy and less overlapping/duplication of local services.

Cash expenditure by Kempsey Shire Council for the 2006 Festival was \$19,493 with contributions of \$4,545 – a net cost of \$14,948.

### **Crocfest 2007**

Indigenous Festivals of Australia Pty Ltd, the organiser of Crocfest, have recently forwarded a proposal to Kempsey Shire Council seeking advice as to whether Council would again provide financial and in-kind support to host the 2007 Northern NSW Croc Festival. A decision is required by 26<sup>th</sup> January 2007.

The Commonwealth's commitment to funding is conditional on State and Local Governments contributing to the cost of staging the festivals. Funding is sought from the NSW Government and the Shire of Kempsey to become involved in the event in 2007 to continue to provide outcomes for students in rural and remote areas of Australia.

The commitment sought for the 2007 Crocfest from Kempsey Shire Council is a proposed \$35,000 in cash and \$5,000 in kind.

This amount represents a solid investment in the community and directly benefits the Kempsey Shire. Total expenditure for the Kempsey Crocfest in 2006 exceeded \$660,000 for this single festival. Expenditure was marginally higher than other festivals in Australia due to the enormous size of the local event. The Kempsey festival has grown considerably in the last 2 years and is almost twice as large as any other Croc Festival, thus there are added costs associated in producing the festival.

Provision has been made in Council's 2007/08 Draft Budget for a net allocation of \$20,000.

Groups involved in the 2006 festival will be contacted again by the Youth Development Officer (YDO) based on existing relationships built through the planning and production of the 2006 event. With a better understanding of the event's reach, these organisations are able to better develop a tailored festival program that highlights regional-specific issues.

#### **REPORT IMPLICATIONS:**

- ***Environmental***

***No substantial environmental implications result from this report.***

- ***Social***

***The festival addresses community and youth development research that indicates community collaboration in youth initiatives promotes youth self esteem by building youth resilience and considering youth as part of a solution and not just the problem.***

***Within the wider community during the time of the festival juvenile crime dropped, school attendance went up and those people involved in the project proved themselves to be a cohesive community.***

- ***Economic (Financial)***

***Financial commitment by Kempsey Shire Council for the 2006 Crocfest was met from existing budgets and community contributions.***

***A provision of \$20,000 has been included in the 2007/08 Draft Budget, however the amount Council is being requested to fund for the proposed 2007 festival is \$40,000 (\$35,000 in cash plus \$5,000 in kind) – a shortfall of \$20,000.***

- ***Policy or Statutory***

*There are no policy or statutory implications arising from this report.*

- *Director's Review*

*Councillors had the opportunity of an on-site visit to 2006 Crocfest on 21<sup>st</sup> September.*

*In view of the increase in the level of contribution sought from Council, consideration could be given to Kempsey hosting the event on a biennial basis.*

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That provision be made in the 2007/2008 Draft Estimates for the funding commitment of \$40,000 sought to host the Croc Festival in the Kempsey Shire in September 2007.

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G B Snape  
DIRECTOR CORPORATE SERVICES