

## Festive Season Strategy 2010-2015

A review of the strategy commenced in June 2012 in accordance with council's 2012/2013 Operational Plan, which included councillor and internal stakeholder consultation along with community engagement.

This document provides a summary of the strategy review consultation outcomes.

### Overview

Results from the community consultation survey undertaken in the preliminary stages of the review showed strong support for festive celebrations (in terms of importance and satisfaction), while direct feedback from the community, stakeholders and councillors focussed on the level and distribution of financial support for festive events, annual budget allocated to the strategy, location, council's delivery model for festive activities and the promotion of the program

### Councillor feedback:

As part of the review process, consultation with all councillors occurred between June and September 2012 to inform the revised draft strategy. Councillors were provided with briefings on the strategy, current program and alternate delivery and funding models.

Themes:

- Increase involvement and active engagement with community organisations
- Increase business involvement in Festive Season activities
- Ongoing financial sustainability, equity and distribution of spend, including concerns over size of core budget
- Maximise use of existing infrastructure/activities

General:

- No extremes of opinion with a high level of accord between responses
- Generally supportive of festive trees, banners, events – noting some concern regarding inequitable distribution of funding and location of activities

- Generally satisfied with the quality of festive trees, banners and events – with some consideration to consolidating community Christmas trees to high access locations, co-located with events
- Suggestion in regard to a need for the community and businesses to increase support in partnership with council
- Supportive of a long term strategy that is consistent in order to ensure equity, continuity and confidence within the community
- No opposition to fireworks displays at appropriate events

### Community feedback:

As part of the 2012 strategy review, the community was invited to provide feedback on the region's Festive Season celebrations. This was done via an online survey during July and August for six weeks. 338 responses were received and analysed, and used to inform this brief to council to assist the planning for future Festive Season celebrations.

Broadly:

- The number of survey respondents was low (0.12% of the SC population).
- Respondents represented 89 suburbs across the Coast and all 44 'localities of interest'.
- Council's current Festive Season activities were rated between "moderately important" and "extremely important" by the respondents overall.
- Respondents felt that it is most important for Council to host Australia Day civic events, produce free community Christmas celebrations and Australia Day celebrations. Average ratings for these options were tending towards "extremely important".
- Respondents overall ranged from being "neither dissatisfied / satisfied" to "extremely satisfied" with the festive season activities currently held in their local towns or suburbs.

- Respondents were most satisfied with Australia Day community celebrations held in their local town or suburb, followed by Christmas celebrations and New Year's Eve celebrations.
- 46.4% of respondents felt that it is 'extremely important' to have festive season activities in their local town or suburb. 30.1% felt that it is 'very important'.
- Respondents identified an equally strong role for council and community organisations in producing / organising festive season activities. Written comments expressed interest in dollar-for-dollar community grants, more involvement by schools and churches, and a Festive Season committee with community representation.
- Respondents were almost evenly divided about whether local businesses should share responsibility for producing / organising Festive Season activities. A few written comments suggested that the business community is already struggling in the current financial climate and that Council and the community should not "go overboard" with festive season activities, but instead target key areas and key events.
- 70% of respondents were supportive of increasing community organisation / volunteer involvement to meet any desired increase in Festive Season activities.
- Nearly 50% of respondents were also supportive of keeping activities within the existing budget, rather than allowing an increase in activities beyond current budget allocation.
- In 2011/12 Sunshine Coast spent three times as much (\$975,000) than the next reported local government area (LGA) – \$325,900 at Moreton, \$170,000 at Gosford and \$30,000 at Toowoomba. Gold Coast and Townsville did not report expenditure.
- Sunshine Coast has a significantly higher spend per capita than other reported LGAs at \$3.18 per head. Costs per capita will reduce in 2012/13 to \$2.81 due to significantly less expenditure required for Festive Season decorations.
- Gold Coast and Moreton produce more events than Sunshine Coast (6) at 9 and 8 events respectively.
- Sunshine Coast funds significantly more community-run events than any other reported LGA = 37 in 2011. Gold Coast funds 10, Toowoomba 3, and Gosford 2. Other LGAs did not report this figure.
- Townsville caps funding of community-run festive season events at a maximum of \$2000 per event. Moreton caps funding at a maximum of \$1500 per event.
- Only Moreton reported that they coordinate festive banners (\$17,000) and decorations (\$83,000) for their LGA. Gosford provides \$20,000 in decorations.
- Sunshine Coast is the only known council which operates its Festive Season program under a specific strategic document.

Current as at October 2012

**Sunshine Coast Council**

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## **Council benchmarking**

Benchmarking on Festive Season costs and activities was undertaken with other Queensland Councils. Councils which responded to the survey were: Gold Coast, Toowoomba, Townsville, Moreton and Gosford

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