



Community Development Strategy 2020 – 2023

Reporting July – December 2023

Building Australia's
best regional community





Bundaberg Regional Council acknowledges the Traditional Country of the Taribelang Bunda, Gooreng Gooreng, Gurang, and Bailai Peoples and recognises that this Country has always been and continues to be of cultural, spiritual, social and economic significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People. We recognise the thousands of generations of continuous culture that have shaped this Country and the people on it.

We pay respect to Elders, past and present. Bundaberg Regional Council further acknowledges other neighbouring traditional owner groups within the Wide Bay-Burnett Region.



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Acknowledgements

Our vision for reconciliation

We are committed to creating innovative opportunities by building stronger relationships, mutual respect and encouraging cultural practices that strengthen and support harmony between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the broader community.

Council values the input from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in decision-making processes at a local level and encourages their active participation.

Acknowledgement of contribution

We would like to acknowledge and thank the members of the community, businesses, community sector and Council staff who contributed to the consultation process and the development of this strategy.

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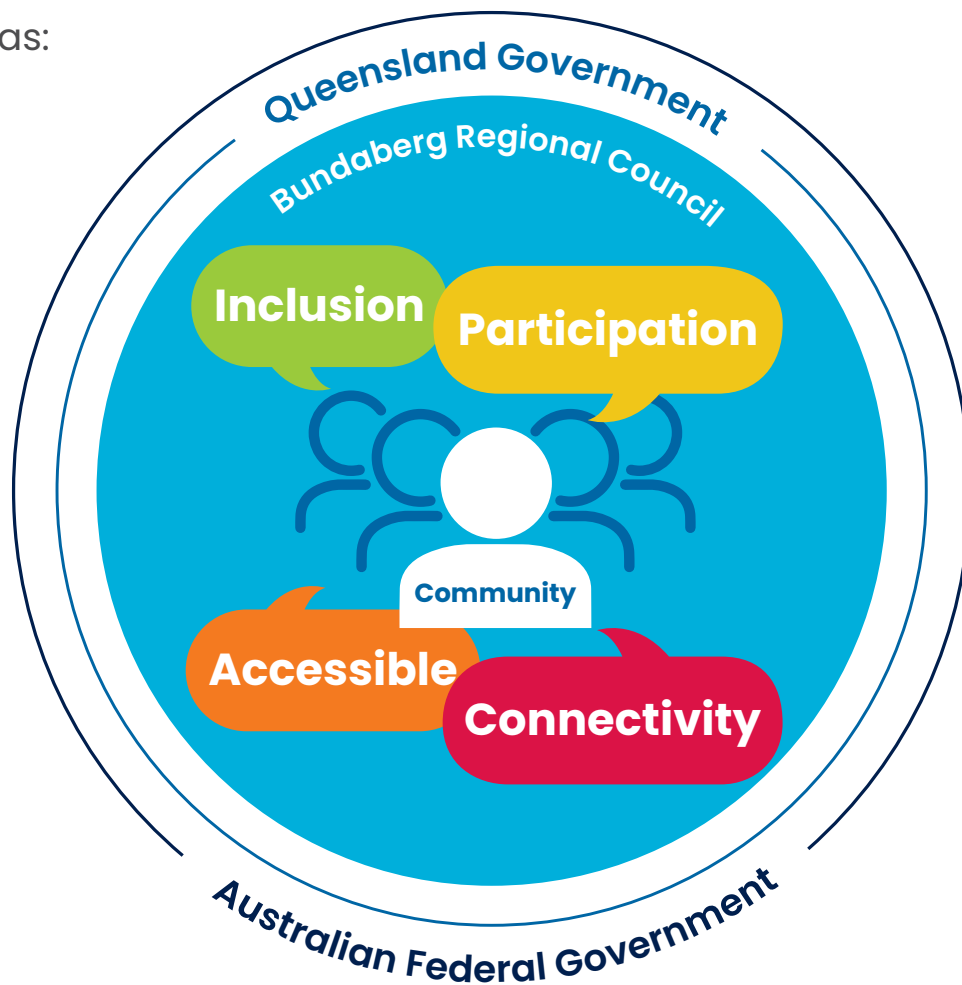
Community development in local government is defined as enabling communities to develop active, sustainable and supportive environments in which people live, work, play and invest.

The recent development of the Bundaberg Regional Council Community Development Strategy reflects the Region's priorities for wellbeing; focusing on improvement in the quality of the community in terms of health, happiness, wellbeing and security.

With the advent of COVID-19, community development (CD) across the region adjusted their interaction with the community to suit the

restrictions on face-to-face communication. Network meetings were conducted via zoom and teams whilst opportunities were taken to deepen and build respectful relationships with community organisations and business via alternative modes of communication. CD has built a flexible approach to communications, as future activities will be altered according to legislation and regulation.

Priority areas:



Measures of success



Priority one:

Inclusion

Priority outcome: A community that is inclusive, involved and engaged. We value and respect the contribution of all community members, without bias of age, gender, ability, sexual orientation, ethnicity and cultural background.

Actions

1.1 Maintain a community engagement model

- Bundaberg Regional Council Community Development Officers (CDO's) respond to community need in a thoughtful, timely and appropriate approach to maximise the positive effects of events, projects and programs.
- Our engagement takes an ongoing multi-faceted approach, inclusive of attending a diversity of local networks, such as the Family and Baby Network, Local Level Alliance, All Abilities Alliance, Seniors Alliance, Working Tourist Safety Forum, Bundaberg Interagency, Community Youth Collective, Bundaberg Housing and Homelessness Forum, Bundaberg Rough Sleepers, the Childers and Gin Gin Interagency.
- In addition, Council consults community through events such as the Diversity and Inclusion Forum, R U OK? Day, Rainbow Day, Options Day, Homeless Week and associated workshops, and the Seniors Month Cooking Up a Storm project. Council also conducts surveys such as the Community Development Strategy 2024 – 2028 Community Survey and those asking for feedback on Parks and Gardens projects.
- Council also provides online platforms that reach across the region. These include What's On Bundaberg, Bundy Region Connect Newsletter, Our Bundaberg Region, Bundaberg Now, Social Media, our corporate website and the Disaster Dashboard
- Isis Child and Family and Childers Neighbourhood Centre, in partnership with Isis District High School and local community members, facilitated their 10th annual Read to Me Day activity. With over 500 children, their families, carers and educators attending, the day focused on early reading and literacy. Participants engaged in listening to stories, art and craft stations and a theatrical production from the high school students based on the theme Fanciful Creatures.
- Gin Gin Neighbourhood Centre collaborated with child and family services, local schools and the Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service to present the Paint Gin Gin REaD Book Week event. The network invited local community groups and businesses to create a window display, celebrating their favorite children's book, to share with the community. At the end of Book Week all the local schools and participating businesses dressed up and the main street of Gin Gin came to life.

1.2 Support people who feel isolated to build stronger connections

- The Homelessness Week project targeted the homeless community at its roots. Flyers were distributed to campsites around the region promoting free haircuts, free checkups for companion animals by local veterinary organisations, a free BBQ and food. Developed to address a broad cohort of the homeless community during Homeless week, a partnership of services helped cook and serve breakfasts as well as provide information and referral pathways.
- Seniors Month Cooking Up a Storm was a program developed to address social isolation in adult men over 50. Ten participants aged between 69 and 92 gathered for five weeks of evening classes to try new recipes, make new connections and expand their social calendars with other like-minded fellows.
- The CD team, with support from Councillors, provided an R U OK? Day pop-up in the CBD Pavilion on Bourbong Street. The pop-up provided an opportunity to open conversations with the general community and share information on how to talk with friends, family, or co-workers about suicide prevention. The CD team also showcased local services for mental health support.
- Additionally, Council's CDO's acquired a Queensland Mental Health Week (QMHW) Grant that allowed them to deliver BBQs at four major seasonal worker accommodation venues. Council was also able to engage the Bundaberg QLD Police Liaison Officer for Pacific Islanders. The BBQs provided an opportunity to build relationships with workers and share information on local laws. The BBQs connected with over 450 seasonal workers, farmers, major employment agencies and accommodation staff, showcasing local mental health services information. The posters provided to accommodation venues outlined accessible services for migrants without Medicare, as well as translation services. The project was also successful in building connections between accommodation venues and local cultural group OI Meri Wantok, which has already provided participation opportunities to give seasonal workers a sense of belonging.
- Childers Neighbourhood Centre conducted its bi-annual Seniors Month Expo – Making Connections, which focused on connecting community to lifestyle and social opportunities available in the region, these included local community groups, community organisations and services. There were a range of exhibitors and guest speakers in attendance, enabling engagement and provision of information. Over 100 people attended on the day and took home much needed information and resources.
- Gin Gin Neighborhood Centre hosted an R U OK? Day pop-up stall at the local community park to speak with locals about available services and to discuss ways to approach a conversation with friends, family, and colleagues. Approximately 100 people engaged by taking flyers and promotional materials, while 30 to 40 people engaged in deeper conversation around mental health.
- Gin Gin Seniors Month involved a variety of activities including a local morning tea, a bus trip further afield and a showcase of local businesses and services through a Seniors Fashion Parade. Smaller events showcased our local groups

(Tai chi, Cards'N'All and Craft groups), new skills (Lawn Bowls and Mahjong) and other support groups. Over 50 people attended and made new connections or gained information.

1.3 Promote a solutions-based mindset

- Council continues to participate within networks as mentioned. However, through this, Council has also influenced the strategic development planning sessions of the All Abilities Alliance and the future direction of the Alliance, to be more community driven.
- The CD team continually promotes Council's community grants programs, leading to numerous face-to-face meetings with groups, clubs, and organisations to assist with developing applications for funding community projects. Council's success in this area is highlighted by an outstanding 10 Community Services and 11 Micro Grant applications during this period, with a higher approval rate due to the standard of applications.
- Council welcomes invitations from small groups and clubs to share information about current trends, projects, programs and events that Government and non-Government organisations facilitate.
- Bundaberg State High School hosts an annual event whereby CDO's are invited to act as interviewers for potential students seeking employment in mock interviews. Most often CDO's are asked where they work in council and for any advice for students seeking employment.

1.4 Promote inclusion and participation within the community

- November coincided with the now annual Diversity and Inclusion Forum held by Council's Community Development team. The forum numbers doubled from the previous year to 70 participants.
- Participants were from a large diversity of stakeholders across the region such as QPS, Wide Bay Hospital Health Service, Council, Community Services, community group leaders, Neighbourhood Centers and community advocates. Participants were educated on several topics, such as cultural community engagement, inclusion of children's voices in child safety, seasonal workers and the state of wellbeing in our region, intersectional lived experience of hidden disability, human trafficking, mental health, LGBTIQAP+ and domestic violence, and lastly, a workshop on LGBTIQAP+ awareness and education.
- During this period the CD team conducted several community consultations with groups and services around the region's rainbow community. Included were Phoenix House, Headspace, Q-Clinic, Edon Place, Bridges Health and Community Care, Bundaberg Gays and Surrounds, as well as individual advocates. Those consulted agreed the next step was to bring together the community, both those identifying LGBTIQAP+ and allies, to participate in round table discussions at Rainbow Community Cafés. The workshops are planned to encourage intergenerational conversations, cover the barriers and challenges with intersectionality, and open communication between allies and some of our local services (community and health).
- Cooking up a Storm, with 10 participants, addressed the growing need for an opportunity for community members to socialise. The experience was developed as an introduction to kitchen

skills for enhanced health and wellbeing for the participants. Five weeks of recipes, increasing in difficulty, enabled the participants to develop their own processes in kitchen management in a safe space.

- Isis Community Care Meals on Wheels and transport program has 23 volunteers taking part. Volunteers deliver hot meals three days a week as well as providing transport to clients within Childers, and to and from Bundaberg for appointments. Volunteers are often recognised and celebrated for their selfless work. During the Community Christmas Lunch, volunteers are also given a certificate, calendar and thank-you voucher.
- Gin Gin Neighbourhood Centre has several volunteers that assist with events and internet classes, run craft workshops and teach tai chi or pilates. Tai chi and pilates are both well attended weekly, especially by seniors. Our Crafter in Residence runs fortnightly workshops teaching a variety of craft skills, while our weekly watercolor classes are consistently attended by a variety of ages. Our volunteer who assists with internet classes for the elderly is well-loved in the community. All volunteers are regularly celebrated for the support they give our community.

Bundaberg

Homeless Awareness Week

80 breakfasts cooked **3** BBQ lunches

and countless

referral pathway brochures distributed.

Childers

Over **500** people

attended the

Childers Making Connections Seniors Expo.

Gin Gin

25 local businesses and community groups created displays for **Paint the Town Read.**

Over **100** community members participated.



Connect Fest! 2023 Yarning Circle, Bundaberg Multiplex Sport and Convention Centre

Priority two:

Participation

Actions

2.1 Community sector engagement and participation

- Councils CD team continue to be members of local and statewide networks. Through QLD networks, such as the LGAQ Community of Practice, our officers gain updates on best practice, advice on projects or local concerns to then share locally. As noted above, Council's CDO's work closely as leading members of numerous networks. Our team continually share information on Council resources, opportunities or concerns are identified and can be investigated, working action groups are formed and projects are delivered through sector partnerships.
- The current strategy is set to end in 2023, so our CD team conducted multiple face-to-face community consultations around the region, connecting with 570 residents from 10 to 65+ years.
- COTA Qld and the Department of Communities provided funding for Connect Fest! Yarning Circle whereby 60 seniors were invited to come together and meet new people in a World Café event. Facilitators then structured a day of discussion and activities to enhance participation and engagement.
- The Child Protection Working Action Group (CPWAG) develops an annual plan of activities for Child Protection Week; yoga and meditation classes for children, an annual dinner, Rainbow Day, and a professional development workshop.
- During school holidays, the team were able to connect with over 50 local youth during their support of the Xmas in the Skate Park event held at Walla Street Skate Park. This included engaging the local QPS and Police Liaison Officers to develop the relationship of youth with local police.
- Activities that engaged both the young, old and in between were the focus of the team in Childers with collaborative partnerships with local providers

Priority outcome: A community that encourages and enables participation socially and professionally valuing both individual and community centric roles. The community will be supported with tools, resources and opportunities to enable participation and build resourcefulness and resilience.

including Isis District High School, Isis Community Kindergarten, Men's Shed, Isis Child and Family Program, Bundaberg Community Development team, County Women's Association, Paragon Theatre and Mayor's Christmas Cheer Appeal. Community participated in Welcome Babies, Creative Wellbeing Workshops, Betterman Project, Pamper Evening, Read to Me Day and Seniors Expo.

- Gin Gin Neighbourhood Centre collaborated with a variety of groups including the Wan'di Indigenous Group, Bundaberg Community Development, Isis Child and Family Program, local fashion businesses and the Mayor's Christmas Cheer Appeal. Events included the Wan'di Yarning Circle, Welcome Baby Celebrations, Seniors Fashion Parade, Interagency meeting and Paint the Town REAd.

2.2 Pathway programs

- With the completion of the new Elliott Heads Recreational Precinct, the CD team delivered a day of Learn to Skate Workshops in collaboration with Fastplant Skateboarding. Seventy young people participated and were able to build their skills and confidence using the new park.
- Senior gentlemen who have retired and are finding their path when they may have lost their caregiver or their caregiver has become debilitated attended the recent Cooking up a Storm workshops with enthusiasm. As kitchen skills were improved and friendships were developed, sustainable outcomes in health and wellbeing were made apparent as recipes were shared and gatherings in the future were discussed.
- Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) activities involve a number of networks related to DFV including; LGAQ DFV Champions Network and online DFV Workplace webinars. 16 Days of Activism is a program developed internationally, with Council partnering with the Anglican Church to develop a program of activities for the annual

awareness raising.

- The All-Abilities Alliance has evolved from two networks; mental health and people with disability. Combined in 2015, the Alliance has now moved to a community providers platform. Council has successfully held the secretariat for this Alliance for over eight years and sees the acquisition by the community as a great achievement.
- Guest speaker spots are always taken up with enthusiasm and an opportunity to promote the many services Council holds (libraries, the Bundaberg Regional Aquatic Centre, Bundaberg Riverside Masterplan), such as the recent Options day activity whereby information was shared on a variety of Council activities.
- Isis Community Care and Childers Neighbourhood Centre employed two trainees in Individual Support and Community Services. The traineeship provides the trainee with a full-time position for the length of their traineeship and aims to give them skills and experiences whilst gaining a qualification at the end of the period.
- Gin Gin Neighbourhood Centre employed one trainee in Community services. The trainee gains experience in a variety of programs and can apply the theory of their qualification to their daily real-life experiences.

2.3 Culture participation

- Our CD team, Mayor and Councillors supported the Onam Festival celebrations of the Bundaberg Indian Malayalee Association. This growing celebration of one of Bundaberg's biggest cultural groups helps form stronger bonds as a cultural group, and continues to positively influence the region.
- Dorrie Day also saw Council connect with hundreds of students with many participating in our Community Survey to build a First Nations youth voice into our strategy, while learning about the employment opportunities with Council.
- Continued participation within the Multicultural Advisory Group and developing connections with the local Migration Integration Manager for Seasonal Workers and the Multicultural Officer at the Bundaberg Neighbourhood Centre, has formed a working group progressing towards developing a Multicultural Social Sporting program.
- The CD team in partnership with Council's Community Arts Development team secured a Celebrating Multicultural Queensland Events grant to conduct a Cultural Colour Festival in Harmony Week 2024. Council have formed a partnership with our local multicultural team at the Neighbourhood Centre and gained support from several major local cultural groups to assist the design and delivery of this community event. This is aimed at building a sense of belonging for our local migrants, as well as a chance to develop intercultural connections and empower the young culturally and linguistically diverse people in the region to be more confident in expressing their culture.
- The Seniors Month event Connect Fest! Yarning Circle brought 60 people from diverse heritages together to discuss their family values, community foundations and respect.

Bundaberg

Connected with **over**

450 Pacific Islander
seasonal workers

during **Queensland Mental
Health Week BBQs.**

Consulted

570 residents

through our **Community
Development Strategy 2024 –
2028 community survey.**

Childers

275 community
members participated in
one or more of the

8 activities
available through the **Childers
Neighbourhood Centre.**

Gin Gin

Gin Gin Neighborhood Centre
collaborated with a **local artist**
to run a series of workshops making
windchimes,
worry dolls and
sculptures for children.

These workshops engaged a variety
of different groups who made new
connections for both children and adults.

1 trainee

is gaining further skills and learning
through a **hands-on traineeship.**



Seniors Month 2023 Cooking Up a Storm program, Bargara Cultural Centre

Priority three:

Accessible

Priority outcome: A community that enables safe and accessible spaces. A safe, active and healthy lifestyle for all with the provision of spaces that are responsive to the needs of the community.

Actions

3.1 Support a coordinated approach to future proofing the region

- Council meets this action with ongoing participation in local and state-wide networks, and engaging further stakeholders through conversations with community. Coordinated approaches taken during this period with network members include the Homeless Week activities, QMHW Seasonal Workers BBQs, Xmas in the Skate Park, Rainbow Day and Child Protection Week.
- As noted throughout this report, the CD team are members of working groups for multiple community led projects set to be delivered in 2024. Current works in progress include; the Youth and Seniors Connect, Youth Drop-In Activities, Multicultural Social Sport, Bundaberg Sleepbus initiative, Governance and Strategic Planning, Resilience in Neighbourhoods.
- Officers serve on several networks addressing homelessness; Rough Sleepers Support Group, Housing and Homelessness Forum, Homeless Awareness Week, Consultation on Strategies for Housing and Homelessness, Local Housing Action Plan.
- The Bundaberg Regional Council Community Grants Program distributes funds to small groups and clubs across the region. Utilising the SmartyGrants Program as an equitable and fair process; proving eligibility, demonstrating need, and providing evidence of benefit to the community and the broader Bundaberg Region, grants are the first step to apply for funding for specific activities that increase membership and capacity for sustainability of the groups into the future. This will be further enhanced by the introduction of SmartySearch, an online platform for the community to access grants outside the region.
- In recognition of Queensland Mental health week, Childers Neighbourhood Centre ran a social media campaign to raise community awareness and understanding of mental health and wellbeing and reduce the stigma and discrimination associated with mental health conditions. This promotion was also conducted with staff, which enabled connection and created space for conversations around mental health and wellbeing.

3.2 Build the community sector responsiveness

- Community Development have been able to successfully transfer the All-Abilities Alliance back to the community. For several years Council has sustained the Alliance, building the capacity of the sector and empowering local services, and individuals. Council will now officially move to a supportive role.
- Council continues to share all community information through extensive email trees across all local sectors, inclusive of community groups and clubs. In addition, the CD team continue to manage and encourage the use of the Community Directory.
- Council have recently updated the corporate website to include information to support local linguistically diverse individuals to access translation or interpreter services to assist communicating with Council and the rest of community.

3.3 Encourage safe, active and healthy lifestyles

- Council continually assists local community groups, clubs and not for profits to utilise local resources, parks, and venues. These groups continue to benefit from not for profit discounts to encourage their use of our facilities. Also, Council provides a free equipment loan program; BBQ trailer, grandstands and Rubbish and Recycling Bins.
- Community Development have assisted Council's Parks team in consulting community on Accessible BBQs and picnic tables across the region. This was done through email trees, newsletters and face-to-face at the annual Options Day event. Our team continue to share feedback opportunities on parks, gardens and venues related projects.
- The Seniors month Cooking Up a Storm project achieved this action by building the capacity of 10 senior men to make healthy food choices when shopping and give them new skills to be confident in cooking these meals, ultimately, empowering these men to healthier lifestyles.

- Through the Creating Wellbeing project, the Childers Neighbourhood Centre were able to engage community members to participate in activities such as painting in the park, creative writing, paper flower making, a mandala workshop and Christmas crafts. The aim of the project was to encourage connection, creativity and promote mental well-being. Around 63 community members attended the workshops.

Bundaberg

12 men built their **cooking skills and connections** during the **Seniors Month Cooking Up a Storm program.**

The **All-Abilities Alliance** is now a **community led initiative.**

Childers

63 community members attended the **creating wellness workshops** conducted in Childers.



Child Protection Week 2023, Kepnock State School



2023 Diversity and Inclusion Forum, Bundaberg Multiplex Sport and Convention Centre

Priority four:

Connectivity

Actions

4.1 Improve education sharing

- The Diversity and Inclusion Forum was one of our major education and awareness building activities during the July to December period to increase connectivity in the community.
- This period also involved promoting Council's What's On Bundaberg website, as this will now be our main activities or events page for community to interact with.
- Council's Community Development team and Neighbourhood Centre Community Connect worker participated in the Community Development of Queensland Conference held in City of Moreton Bay. This provide the team with current best practice education, the chance to learn about successful programs and challenges to be aware of. The team came away with a large diversity of new connections to enhance future projects.
- The Hinterland Neighbourhood Centres actively use social media, newsletters, noticeboards, flyers, the Council events page and Bundaberg Now to promote opportunities for all community projects, programs and events. Childers and Gin Gin Neighbourhood Facebook pages have an audience of 1,000 and 1,600 respectively.

4.2 Strengthen community ties with Council representatives

- Councillors were provided the opportunity to connect with and have conversations with community to encourage participation in our Community Development Strategy survey. This created a great engagement opportunity for residents to meet face-to-face with Councillors to discuss relevant issues.
- CDO's invite Councillors to every appropriate event, project or program and provide activities and tasks that bring the Councillors into contact with the community in an informal and non-judgmental approach.

Priority outcome: A community that supports each other through connectivity to services and information. Understanding the community needs and facilitating the connection with the community sector through referrals, events and content.

4.3 Promote a community approach to combating societal issues

- Overall, this action is achieved through all the previously mentioned activities and projects the CD team are involved in and is the foundation on what Community Development is.
- Council continue to be a leading member of the Bundaberg Housing and Homelessness Forum, which includes supporting the planning and delivery of the Homelessness Awareness Week initiative under the CBD Pavilion. Council has also supported the raising of funds to bring the Sleepbus to the Region.
- CDO's partner with not for profit, Government, State and Federal Departments with a focus on Child Safety Week. Participation in the annual activities include; professional development, awards presentation, yoga in primary schools, a mural by youth, a dinner and Rainbow Day for children under five.
- Furthermore, a partnership of departments resulted in a successful funding application whereby the Seniors Yarning Circle was hosted at the Multiplex. The aim of this project was to break down barriers, make new connections and build cultural awareness. Feedback resulted in 67 participants doing all this and more as the laughter and fun had was immeasurable.
- The Australasian Ice Campaign came to town with a forum followed by a two-day workshop. Council provided the venue and officers distributed the marketing broadly across the community to assist in participation numbers and to raise awareness of this serious societal issue.
- Childers Neighbourhood Centre records feedback from presentations at the centre. Community surveys and conversations also align with this feedback and provides the centre with information on local issues, concerns and needs. This is then used to direct projects, events, activities,

and actions to meet the community needs. Creating Wellbeing is a project that came from conversations with community about wanting more creative activities in the community that are easy to access.

- Gin Gin Neighbourhood Centre gathers information from our community through conversation, surveys and evaluation forms and uses that information to direct our programs. Our community has greatly increased in the last few years and we are building new relationships across our region to create more diverse collaborations.

4.4 Strengthen partnerships which build community capacity

- The CD team have built strong connections with the local seasonal worker sector to sustain better communications and support of the major migrant workforce. Achieved through the Working Tourist Safety Forum and the QMHW Seasonal Worker BBQs.
- Community connection is enhanced by officers maintaining a close ear to community trends. Concern regarding homelessness, cost of living and many other issues in our community are addressed quickly using many soft approaches; conversations, projects and events that provide mechanisms to create change in the community in a proactive reasoning. By example, youth issues have been addressed by utilising existing structures and developing Learn to Skate workshops.
- Council recently engaged Our Community to provide SmartySearch (connected with the Funding Centre), which is a free resource for community use. This will be a search platform added to Council's website, for individuals, businesses, community clubs or local not for profits to access grant opportunities from around the country. This will provide a more streamlined option for finding funding and will encourage greater engagement with Councils website, and subsequent resources.
- The Australasian Ice Campaign Forum has recruited a local representative who is working with CDO's. CDO's have engaged in grant discussions for activities such as the annual Walk Against Ice.
- Engaging with community groups and local organisations assist the Childers Neighbourhood Centre to identify possible partnerships to promote and provide information that address isolation, participation and connectivity. The centre is a hub for information and referral, and often connects community to local groups and organisations, to improve and build community capacity.

Bundaberg

Supported **Homelessness Awareness Week** initiative connecting with and assisting

over 80 individuals.

Seniors Month – Yarning Circle

brought together

60 seniors.

Childers

Childers Neighbourhood facebook page has

1,000 followers.

Gin Gin

Gin Gin Neighbourhood Centre facebook page

has

1,500 followers.





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