



## SHIRE OF COCOS (KEELING) ISLANDS

### COCOS ECO RESORT PROPOSAL

#### LOTS 223 & 224 TRANNIES BEACH WEST ISLAND

#### Community and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

October 2021

#### Scope:

This strategy outlines the proposed process for engaging with the community and stakeholders on a proposal received from Mr Chris Blakeman for a resort at lots 223 & 224 Trannies Beach, West Island. Output from this engagement will provide Council with a sound overview of:

- a. An informed and demographically representative community view;
- b. Broader community views.

These views will be used to assist and inform Council decision-making regarding whether or not to consider leasing the proposed land on to the proponent for the purpose of building a resort.

The IAP2 spectrum has been used as a guide to this engagement strategy.

This strategy will guide engagement but it will also remain open to new opportunities, ideas and suggestions that may arise during the engagement.

#### Issues:

The concept of a resort at Trannies Beach is not new. The land is zoned Special Use – Tourist Resort. To date, none of the concepts have moved beyond preliminary stages of investigation.

The Shire has been asked by Mr Blakeman to consider leasing this land to his company for the purpose of developing a resort. Council is therefore seeking community views on the concept, what may be acceptable and what will not be acceptable to the community; however Council understands that this is a very complex development and therefore is keen to ensure community input is informed and deliberative.

#### Risks:

- 1. Community members do not have a detailed/deep understanding of the pros and cons; the risks and benefits:**

This proposal presents an opportunity that could potentially change the face of Cocos – a “game-changer”. It could result in significant economic benefits and sustainable economic development. There are also environmental and infrastructure issues that



will need to be understood. Given the importance and complexity of this proposal, it is important that dialogue and community input is informed, not based purely on emotion or speculation.

**2. Only engaged and/or vocal community members participate in the dialogue:**

It is not uncommon to receive little input from open calls for submissions. While members of the public may intend to make a submission or complete a survey, many either do not have the time or confidence to write a submission or complete a survey, usually resulting in few submissions.

**3. Community members who engage are not demographically representative of the whole community:**

There is a risk that the views from surveys or submissions are not demographically representative and therefore do not present a balanced or comprehensive view that is reflective of the whole community and excludes the often “silent majority”.

**Objectives:**

The proposed model for the community engagement considers these risks and is designed to manage these risks and achieve the following objectives:

- To provide opportunity for the community to have a deeper understanding of the proposal, potential benefits and risks;
- To ensure input from a demographically representative sample of the community;
- To minimise the risk of minority views dominating.

**Our Commitment:**

The proposed community engagement model is aligned with the “Involve” public participation goal as defined by the IAP2 Spectrum. The “*Involve*” goal commits the Shire to working directly with the public to ensure that community views are understood and considered, along with all other information, in Council decision-making processes.

**Our Values:**

1. Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
2. Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
3. Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
4. Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
5. Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
6. Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.



7. Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

**Methodology:**

The proposed methodology involves three parallel processes:

1. A Citizen's Jury/Community Reference Group comprising of informed, demographically representative residents collaborating to present a report to Council;
2. An open call for public submissions from any member of the community or stakeholder;
3. Specific requests for feedback from key stakeholders, such as, but not limited to, essential service providers, Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (CHMAP Impacts), Regional Development Organisation, IOT Administrator.

**Community Reference Group:** A Community Reference Group (CRG) of up to 30 people, reflective of the diverse community demographic composition, will be provided with detailed information on the proposal and will then deliberate and debate the issue. The selection process will be transparent and will include self-nomination and random selection via a recruitment process with the aim of achieving a group profile that reflects the age, gender and cultural diversity of the community. Technical experts in the areas of economic development, tourism, environment and infrastructure will be asked to act as ex-officio advisors. The CRG will be provided with information and can ask for additional information that will assist with deliberations. After considering all information, the group will collectively develop a set of recommendations for Council's consideration. The aim is to achieve a consensus view on the recommendations however, if consensus cannot be achieved, recommendations will be put to the vote so that Council can gauge the level of support for each recommendation. It is likely that the CRG will be required to commit to a full day to consider all information and to develop recommendations. The recommendations will be reported to Council and made available for the broader community. Participants will be surveyed on their views prior to the day's deliberations and again at the end of the day after their deliberations to assess any changes to their views after gaining a deeper understanding of the proposal's pros and cons, risks and benefits.

**Public Submissions:** As per Council's usual process for community input into proposals and projects, detailed information on the proposal will be widely advertised (in Cocos Malay and English) via the Atoll, Shire's website and social media channels. The advertising will invite any member of the community and stakeholder agencies to make submissions. These submissions will be provided (anonymously) to the CRG and also be made available to Council.



Should Council approve progressing with Community Engagement, it is anticipated that the process will take approx. two months with a report on the outcomes of the engagement and public submissions presented early in the new year.