



COFFS HARBOUR CITY COUNCIL

**SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT
(ORDINARY MEETING)**

COUNCIL CHAMBERS

COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

COFF AND CASTLE STREETS, COFFS HARBOUR

26 AUGUST 2010

Contents

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	PAGE
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CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

The following item either in whole or in part may be considered in Closed Meeting for the reasons stated:

CS10/31	PROPERTY - HARBOUR DRIVE, COFFS HARBOUR	1
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A portion of this report is confidential for the reason of Section 10A (2):

- (c) information that would, if disclosed, confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom the council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business.

and in accordance with Section 10A (1) the meeting may be closed to the public.



COFFS HARBOUR CITY COUNCIL

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT (ORDINARY MEETING)

26 AUGUST 2010

CS10/31 PROPERTY - HARBOUR DRIVE, COFFS HARBOUR

Purpose:

To seek Council approval to acquire 215A Harbour Drive, Coffs Harbour.

Description of Item:

The property at 215A Harbour Drive is the old Police Station/Court House. The property is going up for auction on 4 September 2010. The concept of the purchase of this property is to address the issue of providing a museum for the city.

Currently there is no museum as the existing building was damaged in 31 March 2009 by flood waters. The museum's collections were moved to a storage facility at Isles Drive. Staff and volunteers continued to work there and began a small museum 'pop-up' presence at Palms Shopping Centre. The majority of the collections remain at Isles Drive. The storage facility does not have climate control and this is damaging the textile, glass plate negative and photograph collections. Extreme ranges of heat and cold experienced in the storage facility also impacts negatively on staff and volunteers. Council currently leases the storage facility at a rental of \$1,723 per month. The lease expires in March 2011.

Options which have been investigated for a museum operation include:

- Utilising the old Salvation Army building in Gordon Street, Coffs Harbour – This is a costly option to bring the building up to current standards and the site is seen as being of high value to Council for other purposes.
- Leasing of an appropriate commercial shop front – The museum could operate from an appropriate commercial property. Preliminary investigations undertaken by Council's Property Branch on commercial leasing opportunities in Coffs Harbour indicate that to lease this type of property would cost between \$40-150,000 pa.

- Building a second storey on the existing museum building in Harbour Drive - Geotechnical testing has occurred and indicates that this building would be able to accommodate second storey. Preliminary plans indicate that to undertake these renovations would cost an estimated minimum of \$1.4 million. This site is also Crown Land and Council would be building new infrastructure on a non Council owned site. This figure does not address flooding issues of the lower floor.
- Raise existing museum 1.2 metres in an attempt to address flooding – It is possible to do this with indicative building costs being in the order of \$635,000. The other costs associated with this option would then include addressing the light house light, climate control, fit out, storage, fees and the need to address current BCA requirements and accessibility in an older style building. These costs are likely to be in the order of \$800,000. This would bring the total cost to approximately \$1.43 million with these funds being spent on Crown Land.
- An alternative Greenfield site – To date no appropriate site has been identified and the costs associated with this option are difficult to determine until a site has been identified.

The premises on 215A Harbour Drive are seen as a viable location for the Museum and this is discussed in more detail in the issues section of this report.

Sustainability Assessment:

There are no environmental impacts to Council acquiring for the property.

Any environmental impacts for the proposed use of the property as a museum would be addressed in a Development Application process.

- **Social**

The impacts of Council acquiring the property from a social perspective are that, if successful, one of the few remaining historic buildings in the area will be in public ownership

Using the building as a museum site has broad and positive social impact. It will;

- Restore a cultural and tourist facility to the City
- Address conservation and exhibition issues for the museum's collections
- Increase public awareness of Council's values and commitment to the City's cultural heritage.
- Provide opportunities for education, recreation and research for people of all ages
- Address staff and volunteer productivity and morale

- **Civic Leadership**

Council's purchase of the Heritage property would reflect the outcomes identified in Coffs Harbour 2030 Community Plan and is directly connected to the theme 'Looking after our Community'. The purchase of 215A Harbour Drive as a museum will ensure that

- *We are engaged and connected (with our past, present and future)*
- *We enjoy a comprehensive range of community, artistic, and cultural opportunities.*

These areas are identified as outcomes/objectives in the 2030 Plan and Council is specified as both provider and facilitator. It would also assist in implementing ideas presented in the *2030 Ideas Book* around developing a strong identity for Coffs Harbour, intergenerational learning and interaction, whole of community engagement, encouraging cultural events and working with agency partners to demonstrate what is unique about our community.

- **Economic**

- **Broader Economic Implications**

- Refer to Confidential attachment.

- **Delivery Program/Operational Plan Implications**

- This project is not included in the current plans, but if approved by Council will be reported in the next quarterly review.

- Funding options for the purchase of the property include the use of the proceeds from the sale of surplus land and/or funds generated from private works undertaken by Council.

- **Consultation:**

- Discussion has occurred with relevant staff in relation to potential purchase

- **Related Policy and / or Precedents:**

- Council has in the past acquired property at auction.

- **Statutory Requirements:**

- Council has the power to acquire property for community facilities under the Local Government Act.

- **Issues:**

- The current City Centre Local Environment Plan which is on exhibition indicates a need to look for opportunities to link, through points of interest, the City Centre and the Harbour precinct. This site operating as a museum provides that opportunity.

- This site is seen as suitable for a museum. The facility is approximately 150m² plus kitchen and amenities. Site benefits include:

- - First Police Station / Court House for this area retained in public ownership
 - adequate display areas
 - appropriate location
 - adequate office space
 - adequate work space
 - no flooding issues
 - potential for gift shop to provide income stream

CS10/31 - Property - Harbour Drive, Coffs Harbour (Cont'd)

- potential for café to provide income stream
- insurance on content is available for this facility
- provides funding opportunities/ grants to support Museum initiatives and requirements

Issues associated with the site and premises include:

- Need for parking on site
- Need for climate control
- Lack of storage
- Heritage issues
- High maintenance building in long term
- Disabled access.

On balance the parking, climate control, storage, heritage, maintenance and access issues are able to be addressed with additional funding and this has been discussed in the confidential attachment.

The site, if purchased, can be considered a financial asset for Council. The site of the building for a museum is also an asset. However Council could also consider other uses for the site, if it is successful in acquiring the property.

It may be that the property does not sell at auction and this would then provide an opportunity for negotiations to take place with the current owner.

Should Council be successful in purchasing the property at auction or afterwards, a Development Application would be required to change its use.

Implementation Date / Priority:

The auction is set down for 4 September 2010.

Recommendation:

1. That Council acquire 215A Harbour Drive, Coffs Harbour for an amount to be negotiated up to the limit indicated in the confidential section of this report.
2. That the General Manager be delegated authority to acquire the property on behalf of Council and execute the Contract of Sale.
3. That any necessary documents for the acquisition of the property be executed under the common seal of Council.
4. That the property (if acquired) be classified as Operational land under the Local Government Act 1993 (as amended).
5. That if the property is acquired, that a further report be brought back to Council to approve funding for its conversion into the Museum.

Jenni Eakins
Acting Director of City Services