Byron Shire Council: The Byron Model

How do we want to make democratic decisions in Byron Shire Council that can be widely supported?

Stakeholders' Recommendation Report

Recommendations

Recommendation Combined Business and Residents Roundtable (in addition to current roundtables).
Rationale Currently, the Community Roundtable is working well. We would like to see this replicated for Community Services and Business Roundtables into one common roundtable. These two different groups should meet at least once a year. These meetings (including the Community Roundtable) should be professionally facilitated to an agreed Code of Conduct. Focus is on problem sharing. Council shares their projects and difficulties on their agenda and the group gives advice on problem solving. At a maximum, there are 9 meetings a year (to ensure Council/Councillors attendance). 4 x Community Roundtable 4 x Community Services and Business Roundtable 1 x Combined

Recommendation Replicate the Brunswick Heads Chamber Meeting with GM with the other Chambers where they have a regular meeting.
Rationale Format is that each of the Chambers have a regular meeting with the GM. This should be replicated across the Chambers (dependent on each Chamber agreeing that this is a useful process).

Recommendation
Stakeholder involvement in the pre-budget process.
Rationale Format is that Council forms and invited stakeholder group that takes specific line items and helps specifically target further stakeholder engagement. Small stakeholders meeting looks at pre-budgetary meetings, then that goes to staff and they create proposals that go to community conversations that contribute to the discretionary spending. The stakeholders to be invited are both business and non-for-profit organisations, but the aim should be a 'small' conversation between council staff and stakeholders. Stakeholders commit to *helping* Council communicate the budgetary process. It is important that this is seen as an iterative process.

Recommendation
Mayor and GM 'meeting diary'.
Rationale (why is this area of work important and how will it define widely supported democratic decisions?) After the fact, list of Mayoral and GM meetings for transparency. This would be located on the website.

Recommendation
Have a preference for local consultant advice.
Rationale
The community has many useful resources for advice that should be preferred over external sources. Local knowledge is undervalued.

Recommendation
Website redesign.
Rationale
The Website should be redeveloped for ease of access on specific topics. Specific suggestions around search engine improvement and foregrounding the more important information. These improvements should be made with contribution from the new marketing and community engagement role's input.

Recommendation
Creation of a new internal Council Staff role that combines Marketing and Community Engagement. This could be new or an adjustment of an already existing position.
Rationale
Council's communications would benefit heavily if there was more consistent uniformity across their many streams of community engagement/interaction. This role would apply this consistency by creating a central community engagement role that incorporates a focus on marketing skills.

Recommendation
Decisions on issues of 'place making' become 'high-priority' for community engagement.
Rationale
Considered and thoughtful community involvement in 'place making' is an opportunity to create stronger relationships between the community and Council. These are often the most visible decisions.

Recommendation
Review of Council's Youth Policy.
Rationale
Youth involvement provides the valuable insight of a demographic that is often hard to reach. Council should review their Youth Policy.