

<b>COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE</b>  <b>8 AUGUST 2012</b>	<b>4</b>
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YORKEYS KNOB COMMUNITY CENTRE CARETAKER AND RESIDENCE  
AT LOT 1 ON RP737261, 89 CUNNINGHAM STREET, YORKEYS KNOB  
DIVISION 8

L Golding: 19/3/2: #3642725

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**It is recommended that Council:**

- a) **retains the position of a Caretaker at the Yorkeys Knob Community Centre to reside in Lot 1 on RP737261, 89 Cunningham Street, Yorkeys Knob;**
- b) **prescribes position performance requirements as outlined in this report in support of the Community Centre Management Committee and Council in return for wages and tenancy of the residence; and**
- c) **reviews the Caretaker's performance annually or as required in consultation with the Management Committee and the Caretaker with the view to maximising support to the Management Committee and Council.**

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**INTRODUCTION:**

The caretaker position for the Yorkeys Knob Community Centre (YKCC) has been vacant since the resignation of the former caretaker June 2012.

In addition to concerns expressed by the Management Committee regarding some non-performance of duties by previous caretakers, council considered it prudent to review the operational expenses of maintaining a live-in caretaker including the maintenance equipment required, against allocating the caretaking duties to internal Council staff. As a result, a cost benefit analysis of retaining the caretaker at this location was undertaken before making a recommendation to Council.

This report relates to the viability of a live-in caretaker at the Yorkeys Knob Community Centre at this time and is not intended to provide a position on the costs/benefits to Council of live-in caretakers for CRC facilities in general.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Resolution from Council Ordinary Meeting of 27 November 2008 states:

*That Council schedule maintenance works required for the house at 89 Cunningham Street, Yorkeys Knob and engage a caretaker at the house within the Yorkeys Knob Community Centre.*

The YKCC is a Council (CRC) owned hall-for-hire with large grounds, children's playground, BBQ area and tennis court. The day-to-day running of the hall is facilitated by the YKCC Management Committee under an agreement with CRC. The committee does not manage bookings for the park, playground or tennis court.

The facility includes a Queenslander-style residence restored by Council after resolution of Council at the Ordinary meeting in November 2008. To date the residence houses a live-in caretaker whose duties are expected to include:

- light garden maintenance including lawn mowing and raking
- cleaning of the public toilets twice each week
- taking after-hours bookings for the tennis court
- distributing sporting equipment to children after school hours
- overnight security of the premises.

The recently resigned caretaker at the YKCC had occupied the position for only 12 months following the resignation of the previous caretakers. Both Council and the YKCC Management Committee have received complaints since the inception of the caretaker's position in 2008 about expected duties not being fully carried out. Given this background, it is appropriate to review the position to assess whether a caretaker can reasonably be expected to perform the duties required of them, especially the hours they would be obliged to remain on-site and whether employing live-in caretakers remains best practice policy for the maintenance of local government facilities.

### **COMMENT:**

#### Property Services:

The caretaker's residence is located on Lot 1 on RP737261, 89 Cunningham Street Yorkeys Knob and the Community Hall is located on Lot 2 on RP737201, 58-64 Wattle Street Yorkeys Knob.

#### Caretakers Residence:

- Freehold land
- With a 2 storey, 3 bedroom, Queenslander-style dwelling
- land area is approximately 721m<sup>2</sup>
- Currently vacant

The caretaker's position will be advertised externally and the applicant will have to be reviewed and interviewed to ensure the most appropriate person/s is appointed to the position. As this is now a unique Community Hall facility with a caretaker's residence, officers must ensure the agreement drawn up is for the benefit of the hall, committee and the community.

The Management Committee have agreed to renew the Management Agreement for the hall with a term of three (3) years and to be reviewed annually. This agreement has not been executed as it was beneficial to wait until a decision was made with the caretaker position. Both the Management Agreement and Caretaker's Agreement will be in line with each other to ensure consistency within both agreements.

### Community Development

In line with other local government authorities over recent years, CRC has reduced the number of employed live-in caretakers from several CRC depots. Should Council adopt the recommendations in this report, the Yorkeys Knob Community Hall will be the last Council community hall or centre to retain a full-time caretaker.

Other business units within CRC have retained caretakers for facilities where there is a monetary handling consideration or conspicuous benefit to having someone permanently on-site, e.g. caravan parks. Council has not continued the practice at community facilities where it is not involved in day-to-day running of a facility; such as where a management committee is in place.

### Maintenance and Cleaning

Basic yard maintenance (mowing, whipper-snipping, raking) – CRC responsibilities below:

- Supplying and maintaining the equipment and paying for petrol, ride-on mower, push mower, blower, whipper-snipper
- Other yard maintenance e.g. trimming trees
- Cost of supplies and maintenance of equipment for 2011/12 – \$13,925.53
- Replacement ride-on mower at a cost of approximately – \$5,000.

Cleaning of public toilets twice per week– CRC responsibilities below:

- Council provides cleaning products and equipment.

Options:

CRC has received a quote from a private contractor to undertake the same yard maintenance work for \$9,880. With the addition of contract public toilet cleaning costs and costs for maintenance of the house, the overall cost of this alternative arrangement would be commensurate with the cost of the current arrangement.

### Taking Bookings/Sports Equipment

Taking bookings, payment and turning on lights for use of the tennis court at night

- As an electricity saving measure the lights on the tennis court were locked and the caretaker given the key.
  - The money collected went to the YKCC Management Committee to be reinvested in the facility
  - \$5.00 night playing fee
- Due to complaints about the caretaker not being available to take fees/turn on the lights, as well as to bring Yorkeys Knob into line with Holloways tennis court fee schedule, CRC have recently ceased charging a fee for use of the court and have unlocked the lights.

Issuing of sporting equipment to children after school

- The equipment was given to the YKCC as the result of a grant under terms that it be available to the local children to utilise in after-school activity
- The equipment has not been available to the children for 12 months as the recent caretaker was employed in full-time work and was not available between 3pm-6pm on weekdays to distribute and retrieve the equipment.

Options:

Having a caretaker sign an agreement to be available at predetermined times would provide a better public service to utilisers of the open spaces at the centre

- Securing a caretaker to turn on the lights will prevent them being left on overnight and save electricity costs
- A new caretaker must also be available to engage with the children (have a Working With Children Blue Card).
  - If the sporting equipment is not available for them to play with, they will find their own amusement which has recently included damaging the YKCC facilities.

Security

The caretaker is expected to provide an after-hours security presence for the YKCC by keeping a watch for unwanted activity within the grounds and phoning the police after detection of illegal or anti-social behaviour. Questions have been raised about the effectiveness of a caretaker in providing security: The caretaker's residence is situated on the far side of the playing field from the YKCC building and there are several private residences within closer ear-shot and with the same ability to phone for police intervention to deal with any disturbances.

There seems to have been little change to the amount of vandalism and anti-social behaviour at the site since the introduction of the live-in caretaker. Under the presence of a caretaker CRC has had to repair damage to the site from vandalism including paint stripper poured on the BBQ plate, a couch being dragged into the park for use by local party goers, paint thrown over the building and paths as well as other instances of graffiti, gates being damaged on several occasions, and the drink fountain being blocked with sand and sticks, as well as an attempted break-in to the centre.

Options:

Without an on-site caretaker CRC could

- rely on the surveillance provided by the houses across the road from the YKCC; and
- engage the services of a security company to provide regular patrols of the facility.

If a caretaker was engaged but required to conduct patrols of the facility themselves, this may improve the detection of unwanted activity on the site before it involved damage to the property.

Corporate and Operational Plans:

Community Development has operational responsibility for this matter.

Statutory:

Nil.

Policy:

CRC General Policy 1:06:18 Council Policy on Community Centres and Halls.

Financial and Risk:

**Replacing the caretaker:**

CRC will be required to charge a caretaker market rent on the caretaker’s house and then pay the caretaker to undertake their duties.

Income

- Rent for house at market value \$300-\$400 per week.

Expenses

- Payment to Caretaker for yard maintenance and cleaning \$300-\$400 per week
- Replacement cost of ride-on mower \$5,000
- Cleaning and yard maintenance supplies, servicing and repairs to equipment ~\$14,000

**Without a caretaker:**

Income

- Rent for Caretaker’s house at market value \$300-\$400 per week

Expenses

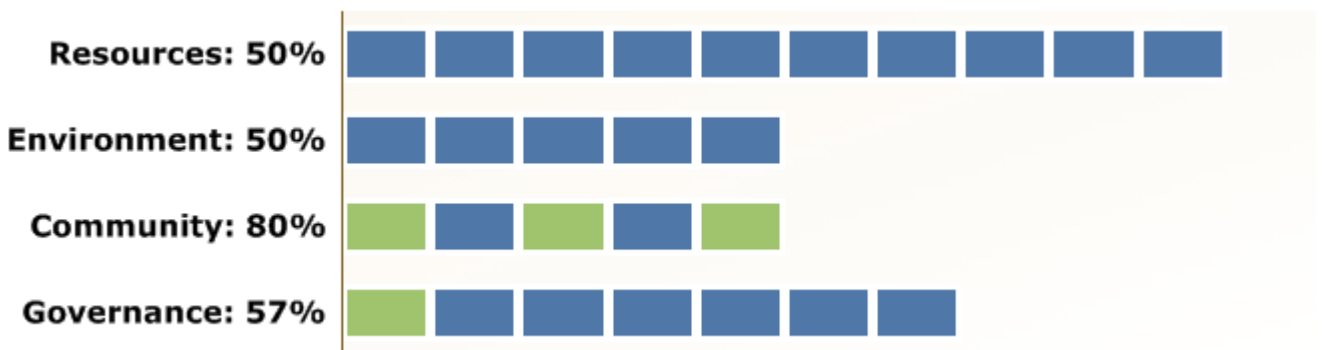
- Park maintenance at \$9,880 per annum
- Costs for cleaning of public amenities
- Costs of house maintenance
- Possible security services costs.

**Non-financial risks:**

Risks to CRC would include the potential adverse reaction from YKCC Management Committee and local community to not replacing the caretaker and renting out the caretaker’s house. There was a great amount of community sentiment behind the renovation of the Principal’s house because of the historical significance of the building and the community feels a sense of ownership over the caretaker’s premises.

The longer the caretaker’s house remains vacant, the more likely it is to become a target of vandalism itself.

Sustainability:



*Community.* This activity will improve the amenity of existing open space by having someone on-site to assist users of the space. This activity aims to improve access to services for members of the community. This activity meets service standards.

*Governance:* The activity supports employment in the region through the creation of a job.

### **CONSULTATION:**

Members of the Yorkeys Knob Community Centre Management Committee.

### **OPTIONS:**

- Do not replace the caretaker, contract the maintenance to CRC Internal Services and rent the house attached to the property; or
- Replace the caretaker and keep their duties limited as per current arrangements; or
- Replace the caretaker on a more stipulated agreement to ensure their ability to fully undertake all required duties as proposed in the sections above.

### **CONCLUSION:**

This report explored several possibilities for the position of caretaker at the Yorkeys Knob Community Centre: doing away with the position, keeping the position with limited duties, and keeping the position but increasing the duties list. From a facilities maintenance and financial perspective there was not a great deal of difference for the YKCC or the Council between retaining a caretaker and taking on the duties in-house.

This report is recommending that Council approve retaining of the position of a live-in caretaker at the YKCC and adding a more structured list of responsibilities to the role because of the extra public service that can be given, at no extra financial cost, by having a person live on-site, from the direct service of providing sporting equipment to children after-school to responding to the strong community sentiment attached to the position and the residence. The problems that have been linked to the role of caretaker in the past should be ameliorated with an agreement stipulating more firmly the hours at which the caretaker is expected to be on-site and the duties they are to perform whilst there.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

Site Plan

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**A/Team Leader Community Development**

Kerrie Still  
**Manager Libraries and Community Development**

Ian Lowth  
**General Manager Community, Sport and Cultural Services**

Site Plan

