

Council poised to abandon cat fees

CAT owners in Noosa may no longer be dogged by registration fees.

Council staff have conceded some residents consider the fees to be nothing more than a revenue raiser.

A recommendation to end fees forced on council in 2008 by the state government will be decided at a general meeting on Thursday.

At committee level yesterday there was no discussion on a report by public order manager Ron Thomas aimed at ending \$18,000 in annual payments.

A number of councillors declined to comment on the issue after the meeting.

Mr Thomas said Noosa had about 1500 registered cats - or at best guess about 20% - of the domestic cats in the shire.

The Newman Government last year handed power back to councils to waive the charge.

Mr Thomas revealed it cost council more to administer cat registration than the charges brought in.

He said microchipping was seen as the best option to ensure strays were returned to owners.

"A number of surrounding councils are opting out of cat registration because of the minimal benefit to the community, little perceived benefit to cat owners and the fact the registration does not address most environmental concerns about the impacts of feral cats," Mr Thomas said.

Sunshine Coast Council's registration fee for an intact cat is \$87, while a desexed cat costs \$27 and a desexed and microchipped feline costs \$12.50.



Surf club goes grey

A SUNSHINE Coast surf lifesaving club has added a new "grey power" focus to its training regime.

Ithaca-Caloundra City Life Saving Club is winning praise for running a Grey Medallion course designed to help over-55s learn CPR, lifesaving and emergency care skills that could save the lives of family and friends.

Club secretary Patricia Barry said many older people cared for grandchildren who had access to dams, pools and the beach.

"In this course we cover supervision and water familiarisation for children and we also teach 'dry rescue' skills, which show how to get someone out of water without having to put yourself at risk by getting in," Ms Barry said.

"While the Grey Medallion isn't a swimming course, we do cover all aspects of being water-wise, as well as keeping safe in and around water."

The program will be held on August 16 and 17.

Phone Patricia on 0403 071 651 or enrol online at www.caloundra.city.aunz.net.



WATER WISE: Patricia Barry, Tony Barry and Roslyn and Graham Edmunds learn lifesaving skills.

PHOTO: JOHN MCCUTCHEON

Grand hits out at child care move

By KATHY SUNDSTROM

A SUNSHINE Coast grandmother has slammed a suggestion that grandparents need a TAFE course to qualify for child care payments in a proposed shake-up of the complicated system.

Liza Hope, who has looked after her 15-year-old grandson Mason since he was a one-year-old, said it was some parents who could do with the TAFE course.

Ms Hope, a member of Children in Grandparent Care Inc, welcomed some of the recommendations in a draft report on child care by

the Productivity Commission.

She supported the idea that grandparents should receive some pay for taking on the responsibility of child care when parents head back to work.

But she was frustrated at the idea that grandparents would need a TAFE course to qualify.

"If they are going to put people through courses, why not put the parents?" she said.

"We are up to speed with all the changes in Workplace Health and Safety, we haven't sat in the Dark Ages

and not learnt about it.

"If they are going to qualify people to look after children, they are going to have to qualify everybody."

"At the end of the day, elderly people cop so much discrimination. We are not idiots, we do keep up with the times."

"We know what's going on in the world and in politics. We are all savvy and raise fantastic children."

"It is a pain in the bottom to go along to courses."

"Some might want to, but I don't think many will."

"Life experience should count for some kind of credit."

"We have all already raised children."

Ms Hope was supportive of children being involved in day care, especially before Pre-p, and strongly believed grandparents deserved support for helping out.

"I do think they need compensation. It's hard work. It's the ones need engaging, and you have to give up your time and energy and give up your own pursuits."

"Most people do it selflessly," Ms Hope said.

"They have to find a better option of paying a lot of money in child care without too much red tape."

Get them reading

CELEBRATE the wonderful world of books from Saturday, August 16 to Friday, August 22 during Children's Book Week at Sunshine Coast Council Library branches.

Portfolio Councillor Jenny McKay said Children's Book Week was an opportunity for children to connect to reading and enjoy the experience of exploring a story and taking a journey to other worlds.

"Reading assists children to create a special bond with others and this year we particularly invite grandparents to spend some quality



time with their grandchildren and enjoy special storytelling sessions at Maroochydore and Kawana library branches," Cr McKay said.

Adults can also meet award-winning artist and illustrator Caroline Magerl (pictured) at an author talk on Thursday, August 21 at Maroochydore Library.

Road retaining wall to prevent landslips

A NEW retaining wall will improve safety on Petrie Creek Rd at Nambour and reduce the chance of road closures in severe weather.

Division 10 Councillor Greg Rogerson said the structure would help prevent landslips.

"This retaining wall will stabilise land which was affected by a significant rain event during the summer of 2013, and reduce the chances of another landslip," he said.

"The project is funded by council's successful application to the Natural Disaster

Relief and Recovery Program.

"Work began on Monday and is expected to be completed within six to eight weeks, weather permitting."

"Council appreciates this will cause some inconvenience and we thank the community in advance for their patience - the safety improvements for motorists and pedestrians will outweigh the disruption to traffic," Cr Rogerson said.

The westbound lane (heading into Nambour) will be closed to traffic during construction.

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