

Festival fun, with a twist

CP 15/09/09

Idea just thrilling

TWO new Queensland festivals are poised to put both Mission Beach and the Far North on the events calendar as a thrillseeker's and nature buff's paradise.

The tourist town south of Cairns is aiming for a slice of the national festival market by staging an Adrenalin Festival and a nature-inspired two-day film festival featuring world and Australian premieres.

"We have skydiving, white water rafting, kayaking and more on our doorstep in a town nestled in World Heritage rainforest and bordered by tropical islands, the Great Barrier Reef and fast-flowing rainforest rivers, so what better place for this?" Cassowary Coast Cr Jennifer Downs said.

The inaugural Mission Beach Adrenalin Festival will be a two-day event including a free thrillseekers fest for youth and the follow-

ing day's Adventure HQ multi-sport race combining ocean paddling and an island rainforest run with jungle track mountain-biking and a coastal trail run.

Organisers said the festival's youth component would include everything from skydiving, an outdoor Wii tournament, outrigger canoeing and beach volleyball to rock wall-climbing, a sandcastle contest and a line-up of youth bands.

Co-ordinator Dee Cameron said the festival would be staged across three beachside venues featuring documentaries, feature films and limited-release screenings.

The event would also include guest speakers, a children's program, a short film contest and photography exhibition.

► The Mission Beach Adrenalin Festival is on October 24, and the On a Mission Adventure Race on October 25. The Mission Beach Film Festival is on November 6-7.

Councils see future in sharing

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FAR North councils have met to discuss collaborating on IT services, regional plans and designs for infrastructure including wastewater treatment plants to save millions.

And the Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils hasn't ruled out a move to amalgamate into a regional government over the next two decades.

Cassowary Coast Mayor Bill Shannon told *The Cairns Post* the councils were beginning to take a commonsense approach for "co-operation, collaboration and co-ordination" before forking out money for projects.

The councils involved in the organisation are Cairns, Cassowary, Tablelands, Cook, Wujal Wujal and Yarrabah councils.

"If we have got to draw up plans, which we do, we would typically use consultants (but) it could be that expertise in a large council already exists," Cr Shannon said.

"We've gone from 10 councils down to four.

"It would be sharing the expertise in design and building methods, just a matter of co-operating with each other," he said.

Cairns Mayor Val Schier said another issue discussed was the

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ROC becoming one council or regional body by 2031 but said it probably could not happen unless the State Government was abolished.

Cr Schier said the group of councils was looking at how to have better political influence on State and Federal governments.

"The ROC probably doesn't operate at its full potential ... it has the capacity to be much more influential and also to be a vehicle by which the councils can better collaborate," she said.

Cr Shannon said smaller councils found it hard to get traction with State and Federal governments but said he thought it would be difficult for further amalgamations to take place.

"There certainly was a view that there was a case to be made for regional government. I think there are 54 natural resource management bodies (in Australia) and I think the magic number in Queensland is 14," he said.

"If those 14 ever become (part of) the 54 states of Australia, it is something that is a long way off, if at all," he said.