

Bendigo Bank birthday bash

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BIRTHDAY CAKE: Directors Patrick Biddlecombe and Tony Lee hold the Mission Beach Bendigo Bank's first birthday cake watched by, from left, Jodi Hunt, Rhonda Murdoch, Alicia Dewberry, Dianna Kennedy-Wood, Gitta Yelds, Debbie Brittain, Sonje Ferguson, Tom Brant and Preston Clothier.

The Mission Beach Community Bank will celebrate the first 12 months of business at the branch with a birthday party on Wednesday, July 22.

The celebrations will include a sausage sizzle, colouring-in competition and face painting. Throughout the day customers can call into the branch for an individual birthday cake.

At 3:30pm Cassowary Coast Regional Council Mayor Bill Shannon will invite applications for the first round of branch sponsorships, made under a promise to return \$10,000 to the community in the first year of operation.

An announcement of the successful applicants is likely early in August. Councillor Shannon will also announce the three winners of the colouring-in competition who will each receive a \$10 bank account.

It has been a busy 12 months for branch manager Sonje Ferguson and her staff members, who have provided a 10am to 5pm Monday to Friday service, and have brought the Bendigo way of banking to the Mission Beach community. "It really is great to see the same faces, and many new ones, coming through

the door each week to do their banking," Ms Ferguson said. Chairperson Rhonda Murdoch said the local board of directors welcomed the passing of the first year of trading, a year which has been a steep learning curve. "We thought there was

a lot of work to be done to get the branch open," Ms Murdoch said. "That workload did not lessen once the doors of the branch opened for the first time to oversee the running of the community company.

"Having said that, it has been a remarkable year and one in which our expectations of what a community bank branch would bring to our community have been realised. "We promised people 12 months ago that we would deliver a banking service that the people of Mission Beach expected

and deserved, and I am confident that we have achieved that goal. "The establishment of our community bank branch really was a community achievement and we would like to share this first year milestone with everyone in the community."