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Gungarde Healing Centre plans

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COOKTOWN

A “one stop shop” for support services will soon be available in Cooktown with the Gungarde Community Centre Aboriginal Corporation planning to build a new healing centre on land donated by Cook Shire Council.

The healing centre would be owned and managed by Gungarde, but work in partnership with all community support services, Gungarde Chief Executive Officer Greg Whittaker said. “The centre would be available as a kind of drop in facility during the day, with staff able to discuss issues with people and link them with other support services such as the Cooktown District Community Centre, Gungarde, Community Health or Cape York Family Centre,” Mr Whittaker said. “There is also a need for short term accommodation for men, and plans are for the centre to provide two nights’ accommodation to adult men while putting them in touch with further support services as needed.”

Gungarde Women’s Group Coordinator Oriel Murray, an experienced family therapy and substance abuse counsellor, would be based at the centre along with a project coordinator. “Healing centres are recognised internationally for their effectiveness in addressing intergenerational trauma, improving wellbeing and reducing rates of suicide, incarceration, domestic and family violence and drug and substance abuse,” Mr Whittaker said.

Cook Shire Mayor Peter Scott said the project had been given conceptual support by his fellow councillors, and the proposal to grant land to Gungarde would be put forward at the June 26 Council meeting. “This centre has been talked about for the past four years by the Cooktown Interagency Group, and after looking at various models we have decided this is the one that is needed most, now and into the future,” Cr Scott said. “The project has strong State and Federal Government support and the construction and ongoing operation will provide numerous local employment and training opportunities.”

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For more information contact Peter Scott via email at mail@cook.qld.gov.au or phone on 4069 5444 or Greg Whittaker on 4069 5412.