

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Forum to discuss childcare future

May 30, 2019

COOKTOWN

Cook Shire Council will work with providers to ensure the doors remain open at Cooktown's only childcare centre following the resignation of current operator, the Catholic Diocese of Cairns.

Council bought the facility in 2016, and it has been managed since early 2017 by the current operator. However this week the Diocese informed Council that it would be stepping away from the centre due to a lack of Diocese resources. "We have a two-step solution to ensure continuation of childcare services to the town," Cook Shire Mayor Peter Scott said. "The first step is to ensure we have an interim provider in place to keep the centre operating and the second step will be working out the long term plan for providing childcare services and what that might look like."

Cr Scott said a community forum would be organised in the near future to gain a better understanding of residents' childcare needs and discuss options for ongoing childcare provision in Cooktown. "The forum will be advertised widely and we encourage everyone with an interest to attend and bring their ideas."

Diocese of Cairns Executive Director of Diocesan Services and Support Kevin Malone said the Diocese would continue to work closely with Council for an orderly transition to a new operator over the next two months. "During this period the centre will continue to operate in the best interests of the children that we care for and to support their parents and carers," Mr Malone said.

Cr Scott said he understood the challenges of limited resources very well, and thanked the Catholic Diocese for their support during the past three years. "The Catholic Diocese came in on very short notice when we were in a difficult position and ensured we continued to provide childcare to our residents, and that is something we are grateful for," Cr Scott said.

For more information contact Council's Director of Community, Economy and Innovation, Lawrence Booth, via email to [mail@cook.qld.gov.au](mailto:mail@cook.qld.gov.au) or phone on 4069 5444.

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