

Council makes a suite decision to help the elderly at Hervey Bay

By RODERICK MAKIM

THE AGED care crisis on the Fraser Coast may be eased with more than 100 new suites approved by the council yesterday.

The council unanimously voted in favour of a development permit, allowing an extension to the existing aged care facility at Torbay Retirement Village in Hervey Bay. Last year, the Chronicle revealed that the Wide Bay region had the

worst ratio in the state for aged care beds to people aged 70 and over.

At a planning and development meeting, the council struck a blow to help redress this ratio, approving 106 new beds providing for low, high, special and palliative care levels for residents.

Torbay Retirement Village CEO Philip Parry was delighted with the approval.

"Council had already approved

48 new beds, and with the decision yesterday there will be a total of 154 beds approved."

Mr Parry said building the new beds could be a lengthy process, but plans were already established for the first round of construction work.

The design for a 24 bed development was expected to be complete within two months, before the tendering process to begin construction in July.

This development was expected to be worth more than \$5 million, Mr Parry said, bringing good news to builders and subcontractors in the area, as well as carers and, of course, those in need of the aged care beds.

Mr Parry said there were also plans for more suites to be built. A number of the councillors spoke at length about the positive news the approval represented at the meeting yesterday.

Cr Linda Harris said she was most pleased to see the approval go through at her last council meeting, considering one of the first items she had to consider as a new councillor in Tiaro, 14 years ago, was an aged care facility in Petrie Gardens.

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ALL-STAR: Japanese students from Izumi High School performing at Fraser Coast Anglican College yesterday.

PHOTO: ALISTAIR BRIGHTMAN



RURAL FIRE: Poona's fire station will double in size.

Upgrade for Poona rural fires

ALL ORIAN: Japanese students from Izumi High School performing at Fraser Coast Anglican College yesterday. PHOTO: ALISTAIR BRIGHTMAN

Japanese kick on from nuke/tsunami disaster

By MITCH CRAWLEY

A YEAR ago, students from Izumi High School in Japan were at the airport waiting to come to Hervey Bay on a cultural exchange, when a devastating earthquake and tsunami ripped through their country.

The group had been waiting at Narita airport, about three hours north of Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant, the area that bore the brunt of the tsunami.

Forced to abandon their trip, the students returned to their homes to face the devastation wrought when the disaster struck.

But just days after the first anniversary of the tragedy, the students have finally made it to the Fraser Coast, where they have shown their country's spirit remains strong.

Performing traditional dances at Fraser Coast Anglican College (FCAC) this week, the students were a symbol of the strength and integrity frequently associated with Japanese people.

Wearing red and blue colours significant to them, a symbol was painted on the back of their shirts - representing happiness.

Before starting the dance, they came together like a football team



LONG JOURNEY: The Japanese students unable to travel to Hervey Bay last year because of home disasters.

would before a grand final - they chanted the words "gum-bet-e" meaning "our spirit, lots of hope". FCAC teacher Jane Barnes said

the Japanese students had enjoyed immersing themselves in Australian culture during their week-long stay. "At home they eat a lot

of rice and miso soup. We eat quite a lot of meat - I think some of them have tried a meat pie," Mr Barnes said.

rural fires

By RODERICK MAKIM

THE RURAL Fire Brigade in Poona is in line for an upgrade.

At the last planning and development meeting before the council elections, the Fraser Coast Regional Council approved a development permit for the Sandy Straits Rural Fire Brigade facility. The facility, at Snapper Dr, will have a 102 square metre extension added to it.

This will almost double the size of the fire station.

The majority of the extension will be an enclosed area for additional vehicle storage.

There will also be a storeroom for equipment, along with a locker area which will be used for indoor training and recreation and a new restroom for the volunteers.

Graeme McWilliam, secretary of the Sandy Straits Rural Fire Brigade, said the development would help "bring the fire station out of the Dark Ages".

Mr McWilliam said the planned improvements were part of an ongoing program bringing the facility up to OHS standards.

"It will also help retain and attract new volunteers," he said.

A spokesman from the Poona Ratepayers and Progress Association said this was good news for the volunteers who made up the fire brigade.

"They didn't have any of these things before," he said.

The council learned that the proposal complied with all relevant provisions of the Maryborough City Plan and the Sustainable Planning Act.

The proposal was passed unanimously by the council.

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