

Candidate Information

Cook Shire Council

Curator - Botanic Gardens

May 2021

Cook Shire



Cook Shire Overview



Cook Shire enjoys a mild tropical climate with the wet season typically running from January to March, which is also the hottest part of the year. April to December brings a drier period and cooler weather, with temperatures averaging 27 degrees.

The number of people visiting Cook Shire and moving to this beautiful region is growing steadily, as access and facilities improve across the communities. There are airports and airstrips in most areas of the Shire, with the largest in Cooktown and Coen, and scheduled or charter flights available to those destinations and there is a regular bus service between Cairns and Cooktown.

Cook Shire is the largest land area shire in Queensland. From the Bloomfield River in the south to just north of the Jardine River, it covers more than 100,000km² and occupies 80 per cent of Cape York Peninsula.

Cook Shire is a vibrant area, from the main township of Cooktown to smaller outlying communities rich in Indigenous history, agriculture, tourism and arts. About half of the Shire's 4400-strong population live in Cooktown, on the banks of the Endeavour River, with the remainder spread between the smaller population centers of Marton, Laura, Lakeland, Coen, Ayton, Rossville, Portland Roads and offshore islands including Lizard Island.

Cook Shire is enriched by the unique contributions of its smaller communities, with Lakeland a national leader in agriculture and Laura world famous for its rock art.

Cook Shire Council

Council has developed an organisational structure that maximises the effectiveness of service delivery to the community. The Council comprises the Chief Executive Officer and Executive Leadership Team along with three departments:

- Organisational Business Services.
- Community, Economy and Innovation.
- Infrastructure Services.

The Chief Executive Officer, Directors and Mayor form the Executive Leadership Team. The role of this team is to provide consultation on issues regarding the Council's strategic direction and long-term planning.

As one of the largest employers in Cape York, Cook Shire Council supports this growing region and a diverse community of over 4,400 people. It was recently ranked in the top 10 per cent of local governments across Australia so there couldn't be a better time to experience everything the region has to offer and work for a Council that is focused on continual improvement in everything it does for the communities it serves.

Construction has been completed on the Gateway to Cape York project. This \$1.2 million project at Lakeland on Mulligan Highway features an iconic "gateway" which includes a purpose-built traveler information centre, a rest stop area and an interactive sculpture park that showcases communities from Cape York. The projects completion is in time to welcome visitors attending the Cooktown and Cape York Expo 2021 being held between 11-20 June this year.



Cooktown Botanic Gardens

The Cooktown Botanic Gardens were established in 1878 making them one of Queensland's oldest regional botanic gardens and houses five major plant collections, including a collection of species traditionally used by the local Aboriginal people; a rare and threatened plant showcase and a collection of some of the species collected by Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander in 1770.

Listed under the Queensland Heritage Register, the gardens also retain a number of elements of their late 19th century design, including garden terraces, dry-pitched granite rockpools, subsidiary covered stone-pitched drains, stone steps, wells, rock garden survivals, and diverse archaeological elements. Also featured amongst the collections is a palmetum, a rainforest garden, a water lily pond, and Nature's Powerhouse Café that, with its fresh, simple menu and tropical, under-cover alfresco area, is without a doubt one, one of Cooktown's best-kept dining secrets.

Cooktown Botanic Gardens house five major plant collections:

- species traditionally used by the local Aboriginal people
- species collected by Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander in 1770
- specimens provided by the Queensland Acclimatisation Society and planted in the gardens in the 19th century
- species painted by local artist Vera Scarth-Johnson
- species of rare and threatened plants of the shire

The gardens also have:

- a palmetum, featuring tropical palms
- rainforest garden
- bush tucker garden
- heath garden
- water lily pond, rainforest garden, bush tucker garden and heath garden



Cooktown Botanic Gardens (Cont.)

The Nature's Powerhouse facility, located in the Botanic Gardens, features the Vera Scarth-Johnson Gallery, Exhibition Space, Gardens' Shop, Café and the Cooktown Visitor Information Centre. The Vera Scarth-Johnson Gallery displays a collection of original botanical illustrations of flora from the region, painted by Vera Scarth-Johnson. You may also find prints of Joseph Banks Florilegium in there. Many plants displayed in the Gallery can be found in the adjoining Botanic Gardens.

The 62 hectare **Gallop Botanic Reserve** comprises high spurs of large granite boulders, bounded to the east by a granite headland with indigenous vegetation extending to the ocean and beaches at Finch Bay and Cherry Tree Bay. A walking trail within the Reserve links Grassy Hill with the Botanic Gardens via both Cherry Tree Bay and Finch Bay. A branch trail leads to two old quarries where there is still evidence of hand-quarrying. The granite blocks that were cut from these two quarries were used to kerb and channel the streets of Cooktown. More information on the Cooktown Scenic Rim Walking Trails can be found [here](#)

As part of the Cooktown Botanic Gardens and Gallop Reserve 2018-2028 Masterplan, and with recent funding through the Australian Government's Community Development Grants Program, the Gardens have also recently seen a number of upgrades, including enhanced accessibility and resurfacing of pedestrian pathways throughout the park; design and construction of The First Peoples Grove, installation of picnic shelters, a new Orchid House and Information Hub and new orientation signage and labeling.

To learn more about the history, heritage, and cultural significance of the gardens, see its [heritage listing](#).



Council Information

Cooktown Botanic Gardens and Gallop Botanic Reserve Master Plan 2018-2028

Cooktown Botanic Gardens Map

For further information please visit the website at
www.cook.qld.gov.au



Curator – Botanic Gardens

Division:	Infrastructure
Location:	Council's Depot Office, 31 Charlotte Street, Cooktown
Reports to:	Jim Doidge - Manager, Parks and Waste Operations
Employment Status:	Permanent full time



POSITION OBJECTIVES

- To take a holistic approach to the maintenance and development of the Cooktown Botanic Gardens and Gallop Botanic Reserve including adjacent walking tracks and the Queens Park Oval.
- To lead staff (3) and the associated maintenance and development activities within the Cooktown Botanic Gardens and nursery.
- To maintain plant species database and interact with other botanic gardens and herbariums for the benefit of Cooktown Botanic Gardens.
- To provide accurate technical advice and support on horticulture and botanical matters to the Manager, Parks and Waste Operations, and other Council departments.
- Undertake special projects within the Parks and Gardens area, as directed by the Manager, Parks and Waste Operations.

A full Position Description can be accessed [here](#)

Selection Criteria

Essential:

- Tertiary qualifications in a relevant discipline.
- Demonstrated experience and knowledge in the areas of horticulture, botany and landscaping and able to demonstrate a love of living plants, plant collections, and people, as well as have expertise in living collections management.
- Demonstrated high level organisational, time management and priority setting skills.
- Capable of strenuous physical work.
- Demonstrated skills in database management relevant to botanic gardens.
- Demonstrated knowledge of plant propagation, culture and tropical plant identification.
- Demonstrated experience in operating as an effective team leader.
- Current Queensland Class "C" Driver's Licence.



Initial Focus and Challenges of the Role

Whilst Tony Roberts officially retires in July he has agreed to stay on to assist and mentor the incoming Curator. This is a unique opportunity to understand how he has applied his scientific knowledge and his approach to transforming these gardens over the past 5 years. This includes a database created to capture and document the species within the garden.

With significant works underway and plans for several projects to be completed in the foreseeable future you will be engaged with and build relationships with the contractors and staff involved in these to ensure agreed outcomes.

The effective curatorship of the Gardens will require deep scientific knowledge and this aspect will be drawn upon from Day 1 to ensure the integrity of these tropical gardens is maintained for future generations and to be the 'go to' person for plant identification across the Shire.



Why this role?

- Reporting to the Manager Parks and Waste Operations, you will be able to make the role your own and actively continue the legacy of work done by Tony Roberts the retiring Curator.
- This is a very exciting time to be part of Cook Shire Council. Recent federal funding of \$1.98 million has enabled the delivery of project works and upgrades to the Cooktown Botanic Gardens precinct consistent with the Masterplan 2018-2028 which has created an even more extraordinary Botanic Gardens for the Cook Shire community and visitors alike.
- If someone has very strong botanical and horticultural skills and is ready to 'step up' into a Curator Role – the incumbent will guide and mentor you across the other aspects of the position.

The following Projects are nearing completion:

- Entrance roadway and parking
- Orchid house upgrade.
- Pathway paving incl BBQs and park shelters.
- New interpretive signage.
- Garden edging and stone work.
- Creation of First Peoples Grove.
- Once further funding has been secured further projects identified in the Masterplan will be undertaken expanding the plant collections and enhancing the entrance façade



Other Information

- Cook Shire Council is ranked in the top 10 per cent of local governments across Australia, so there couldn't be a better time to experience the diversity the region has to offer and work for a Council that is focused on continual improvement in everything it does for the communities it serves.
- Cook Shire Council is an equal opportunity employer and operates under a Certified Agreement.
- The tasks for the role will be subject to change from time to time as Cook Shire Council's organisational direction is refined and developed to meet ongoing needs. Any such re-organisation of duties shall be the subject of discussion with the position incumbent.



Recruitment Process

Application Period: Monday 17th May – Monday 7th June 2021

Closing date for Applications: 10pm, Monday 7th June 2021

Initial Assessment: 8th June to 10th June 2021

Council Interviews: Week commencing 14th June 2021

Assessing Applications

Peak Services will review all applications and provide an initial recommendation of suitable candidates to Council.

With the recommendation of Peak Services, Council will determine a shortlist of suitable candidates, and will arrange interviews with the Council panel. The Council may require the candidate to undergo psychometric testing to assist in understanding the candidate's working preferences and attributes as well as fit for the organisation. There will be a requirement to provide references and possibly the need of a criminal history check based on Council's discretion.

Privacy Information: Peak Services is collecting your personal information in accordance with the *Information Privacy Act* for the purpose of assessing your skills and experience against the position requirements. The information that you provide in your application will only be used by employees of Peak Services. Your information will be provided to authorised Council Officers, including Human Resources, interview panels and hiring managers.

Council Benefits

- **A salary between \$78,778.00 and \$82,858.00 + Super will be negotiated subject to qualifications, experience and knowledge.**
- **SPA Salary Packaging – A summary of the benefits are listed below and further details will be provided to the successful applicant.**

Salary Packaging is a tax effective way to receive your salary as a combination of income & benefits that allows you to deduct some of your pre-tax income & use it to pay for a variety of benefits.

By reducing your pre-tax income you can reduce the amount of income tax you pay & in turn increase the amount you take home each pay day.

Employees based in an Australian Tax Office (ATO) designated remote area are eligible for additional benefits. These fringe benefit tax (FBT) exempt items are offered by the Federal Government to assist rural & remote organisations to attract & retain employees.

Employees renting a residence in a remote area can salary package 50% of rental payment as an FBT exempt benefit. Employees renting an Employer owned residence can claim 100% of rental payment as an FBT exempt benefit.

100% mortgage interest payments must be packaged to realise 50% exemption and also include FBT liability for the remaining 50%.

Remote area fuel packages also need the correct FBT liability and this is packaged in the same format as the remote area mortgage interest.

- **Annual locality allowance single \$2367, with dependents \$4734.**
- **Council's Indoor Certified Agreement allows for:**
 - * **5 weeks annual leave**
 - * **5 days bereavement leave**
 - * **15 days sick leave**
 - * **Sick leave incentive bonus**
 - * **Overtime and/or TOIL**
 - * **1 RDO per fortnight.**
- **In the last staff survey completed and benchmarked against 90-plus other councils, Cook Shire Council was in the top quartile in terms of overall staff happiness, engagement and performance, making it a great place to work!**



Principal Consultant Recruitment – Rona Horsfall

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