



AGENDA

Ordinary Meeting of Council

8 September 2015

**ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL
TO BE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, MORUYA**

ON TUESDAY 8 SEPTEMBER 2015

COMMENCING AT 10.00AM

AGENDA

(Proceedings of this meeting will be recorded as per Eurobodalla Shire Council's Code of Meeting Practice)

- | | | |
|------------|--|-----------------|
| 1. | WELCOME, ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY & EVACUATION MESSAGE | |
| 2. | APOLOGIES
Nil | |
| 3. | PUBLIC FORUM (AGENDA ITEMS ONLY) | |
| 4. | CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING | |
| 4.1 | Ordinary Meeting held on 25 August 2015 | |
| 5. | DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST OF MATTERS ON THE AGENDA
(Declarations also to be made prior to discussions on each item) | |
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| 6. | MAYORAL REPORTS | |
| 7. | NOTICES OF MOTION
Nil | |
| 8. | QUESTIONS ON NOTICE FROM COUNCILLORS
Nil | |
| 9. | PETITIONS
Nil | |
| 10. | GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORTS | |
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11.	PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY REPORTS	
	Nil	
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DR CATHERINE DALE
GENERAL MANAGER

GMR15/026 NSW COASTAL CONFERENCE 2015

E14.8054

Responsible Officer: Dr Catherine Dale - General Manager
Attachments: Nil
Strategic Objective: Collaborative Communities
Delivery Plan Link: C1.1 Conduct the business of Council in an inclusive, responsive and transparent manner
Operational Plan Link: C1.1.1 Support the councillors in meeting their statutory obligations and roles as community representatives

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The NSW Coastal Conference will be hosted by Great Lakes Council between November 10 –13 2015 at Club Forster, Forster.

The three day event is comprised of plenary sessions, concurrent sessions, field trips (addressing some of the local coastal, estuary and marine management issues), networking events and the Annual NSW Coastal Management Awards.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council determine whether it wishes to be represented at the NSW Coastal Conference 2015 to be held on 10 – 13 November 2015 in Forster and if it so determines:

1. Council nominate a representative to attend the Conference;
2. Council representative be reimbursed out of pocket expenses in accordance with the Councillors' Expenses and Facilities Policy.

BACKGROUND

The Conference has been held annually for the past 23 years and has grown to become one of the most successful coastal industry events held in Australia. The conference attracts over 220 delegates each year, who are interested in or working within the fields of: coastal and estuary management research; education and service provision; and policy.

Representatives from local government, user groups and community volunteer organisations also attend.

Past conferences have been held in Ulladulla (2014), Port Macquarie (2013) and Kiama (2012).

The full conference program can be viewed at <http://www.coastalconference.com/>

CONSIDERATIONS

An Early Bird registration fee of \$755 is available until 18 September 2015. Full registration following this date will cost \$875.

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Policy

Council's policy provides that attendance at seminars and conferences will normally be limited to two representatives. The principle of having one Councillor and an appropriate staff member attend is considered as *best practice*.

Councillors attending training seminars and conferences are to provide a brief report to Council on the outcome and issues following the conference.

Financial

Registration for Early Bird is \$755 and includes attendance at all conference sessions.

Council will reimburse or pay registration fees, accommodation, meals, parking, telephone and travel expenses associated with attendance to the Conference plus any other reasonable and directly related out of pocket expenses.

CONCLUSION

The NSW Coastal Conference is an opportunity to examine how the most recent research and coastal planning initiatives are being applied across New South Wales. Any Councillor attending will have an opportunity to discuss coastal management issues first hand with practitioners in the field and with Councillors and staff from other local government areas.

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E11.5138

Responsible Officer: Cath Reilly - Executive Manager Communication and Tourism

Attachments: 1. Summary of 48 submissions about the Visitor Services Proposal
2. Under Separate Cover - Confidential - Full submissions
3. Independent My Travel workshop submissions

Focus Area: Productive Communities

Delivery Program Link: P4.1 Provide tourism destination marketing and visitor services

Operational Plan Link: P4.1.2 Provide and manage Councils Visitor Information Centres (VIC)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarises the community's feedback about the Tourism Visitor Services Proposal Report GMR15/005 that was on public exhibition from 25 March to 20 May 2015, and seeks Council's endorsement to progress part of the proposal which is to seek Expressions of Interest to outsource the management of Council's two visitor information centres, in a manner that responds to issues raised during the community engagement.

The main purpose of seeking expressions is to start the first step of a multi-stage process to determine if there is interest from individuals, not for profit incorporated organisations or businesses to operate the Batemans Bay Visitor Information Centre, Narooma Visitor Information Centre or both.

The intent of the Tourism Visitor Services Proposal was to meet the changing needs and behavior of visitors in their pre-holiday planning phase and when seeking information while in Eurobodalla, and to ensure that Council's tourism budget delivers visitor information services and a destination marketing strategy that is competitive, effective and efficient.

The proposal presented a way to respond to independent advice that Council should allocate a greater proportion of the existing budget to the web and digital environment, and that Council needs to move to embrace the digital economy.

Extensive community engagement was undertaken during the exhibition period which extended for six weeks. Recommendations in this report support the feedback from more than 80% of people who made submissions, which was that they want physical Visitor Information Centres in Eurobodalla to remain.

The Visitor Services Proposal included five service delivery streams, one of which was that Council could seek Expressions of Interest to outsource the existing Visitor Information Centres to commercial or not for profit organisations who meet the Accredited Visitor Information Centre criteria, and offer free Wi-Fi hotspots with Council continuing to support the services through providing print brochures, display assets, training if required, some signage and promotional support.

The remaining four delivery streams included a seven day a week visitor information contact call centre, a pop-up mobile visitor information service, visitor information hubs and a volunteer tourism ambassador program. These latter four proposed delivery streams have resulted in minimal comment during the community engagement and as they are dependent

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on resources becoming available, these may be further investigated for their viability and priority if and when a new model for the visitor centres is in place.

The Tourism Advisory Committee has been briefed on the findings of the community engagement. In addition, some members attended information sessions and workshops. The committee provided valuable input into how the EOI should be developed and progressed to respond to issues raised during community engagement, and four committee members have been invited to provide further input into the development of a draft EOI. At their meeting on 18 June 2015, the committee moved a motion to support Council seeking Expressions of Interest to deliver accredited Level 2 or 3 Visitor Centres in Batemans Bay and Narooma, and recommended that the EOIs address concerns about governance issues raised during the consultation about how it will manage and ensure the neutrality and quality of the service, and that the option that Council could provide some level of operational support is included.

Tourism is an important industry in Eurobodalla. It is recognised that visitor centres, local businesses and the community all contribute to supporting growth in the visitor economy by distributing information about experiences that can increase the length of time people holiday in Eurobodalla and how much they spend while here. Alongside of this, Council's marketing activities which aim to attract people from Sydney, Canberra, and Regional NSW, and internationally by raising awareness of the many experiences on offer in their pre-holiday planning phase, are also an important contributor to the visitor economy.

Many visitor centres across Australia are managed by organisations other than councils, or in partnership with councils. Progressing a more efficient way of continuing to provide visitor services in the Batemans Bay and Narooma Visitor Centres is a way for Council to more effectively allocate its tourism funding to support the tourism industry, employment and other benefits to the community that tourism creates.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT

1. Council note the feedback from tourism businesses and the community on the Tourism Visitor Services Proposal Report GMR15/005.
2. Council notes the advice of its Tourism Advisory Committee.
3. Council seeks Expressions of Interest from suitably qualified persons, not for profit organisations or businesses to operate the Batemans Bay Visitor Information Centre, or Narooma Visitor Information Centre or both.
4. If a new model for managing visitor centres is implemented, that the ongoing savings that result are reattributed to remain in Council's allocation of funding for tourism.

BACKGROUND

The Visitor Services Proposal was one of the outcomes of the Organisation Service Review Visitor Information Centres report PSR14/034 that was endorsed on 24 June 2014. The Organisation Service Review Visitor Information Centres report PSR14/034 provided detailed

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background and recommendations about the operations and costs of existing visitor information centres in Batemans Bay and Narooma, research about trends and use of technology and the need to commit funds to web and digital marketing activities to maintain competitiveness. This report formed the basis for Council resolving to seek an alternative model for the delivery of visitor information services.

Options were developed and in November 2014 the Tourism Advisory Committee requested that these be independently investigated to ensure that whatever replaces the current model is a robust alternative that supports the tourism industry. My Travel Research was engaged and the report and recommendations received in December 2014 was attached to the 26 March 2015 Council Report. Some of the key findings and recommendations (summarised and paraphrased) from the My Travel Research report were that:

- The current solution does not meet the best practice standards for use of resources.
- A greater proportion of the existing budget should be reallocated to web; Council needs to move to embrace the digital economy.
- A critical success factor is that all elements of the visitor information services approach should be aligned and integrated with marketing and promotions, branding etc.
- The solution must have flexibility at its core.
- Council should move from being a visitor information centre provider, to being a visitor information provider.
- Usage of VICs is highly correlated with longer stays and higher spend and the research to date has not found evidence of any destination wholly exiting a physical presence. Whilst individual visitor centres have been closed, these are normally substituted with a physical presence in a different format or location. For example, there has been a shift to mobile VICS/'pop ups' or to new models like sub-contracting, co-locating or virtual services.
- If budgets do not permit Council to offer both the mobile and outsourced centres options, it should at least offer one.

After reviewing the independent report, further feedback from the Tourism Advisory Committee was incorporated into the Visitor Services Proposal and recommendations.

At its ordinary meeting on Tuesday 26 March 2015, Council considered and agreed to engage with the community on the Visitor Services Proposal which aimed to;

- ensure that visitors continue to have access to quality information that encourages expenditure and longer stays
- support and align with destination marketing activities and programs
- support tourism businesses
- grow the visiting friends and relatives market
- engage local residents in a tourism ambassador program.

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In addition, the proposal was intended to provide Council with the flexibility to change and adapt the delivery of visitor services in the future to respond to further changes in visitor behavior, technology and the tourism industry.

CONSIDERATIONS

Addressing issues and concerns

Council's Tourism Advisory Committee has assisted staff consider how best to address the main issues and concerns raised during community engagement on the Visitor Services Proposal. These are summarised below.

Commitment to tourism – *Council should confirm its commitment to tourism and that this proposal is not a 'backdoor' way to cut the budget.*

This is addressed in Recommendation 4 in this report: If a new model for managing visitor centres is implemented, that the ongoing savings that result are reattributed to remain in Council's allocation of funding for tourism.

The process – *a transition plan should be developed - the process appears to be rushed and this could create risk.*

This would be addressed through an Expression of Interest process which is the first phase of a multi-phase process that allows for feedback from interested parties prior to a more formal tender being developed.

Governance issues – *Council needs to consider how it will manage and ensure neutrality and quality of the service if outsourced, and who should be allowed operate it. Council needs to continue to oversee the service.*

This would be addressed in an Expression of Interest which would include that applicants must deliver an accredited Level 2 or 3 Visitor Centre, with preference for a Level 2. The accreditation process provides visitors and the industry with an assurance that an accredited centre is committed to quality business practice and professionalism. The primary focus is to ensure that standards of service delivery meet visitor expectations.

Fairness – *there is concern about existing staff and a desire to accommodate them by giving them preference in any new arrangement.*

Council cannot nominate a preference for who is employed as requirement of the EOI, noting that applicants may propose a model that does not include paid staff. Applicants may at their own discretion consider to employ or enter into arrangements with existing staff. Council will manage the potential impacts on staff in accordance with the requirements of the NSW Local Government Act and the Local Government (State) Award 2014.

Expression of Interest (EOI)

The main purpose of an Expression of Interest would be to:

1. Determine the level of interest for individuals, not for profit incorporated organisations or businesses to operate the Batemans Bay Visitor Information Centre, Narooma Visitor Information Centre or both.

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2. Collect information for a decision about whether the proposal to operate the Batemans Bay Visitor Information Centre, Narooma Visitor Information Centre or both will proceed to the next stage.
3. Collect information to refine the Specification.
4. Subject to 1, 2 and 3 above, develop a shortlist of individuals, not for profit incorporated organisation or businesses from which tenders or quotations could be invited.

The EOI is the first stage of a multi-stage process. Following the close of the EOI, Council may proceed to calling a restricted Request for Tender. The EOI is not an invitation to enter into an agreement.

The following is a summary of some elements that would be contained in the EOI.

The Visitor Information Centres in Batemans Bay and Narooma are to be maintained with Level 2 or Level 3 accreditation as defined by Destination NSW for AVICs. Accreditation provides visitors and the industry with an assurance that an accredited centre is committed to quality business practice and professionalism. The primary focus is to ensure that standards of service delivery meet visitor expectations.

- An applicant must support Council's destination marketing activities, the Eurobodalla Destination Management Plan 2011 to 2010 (DMP), and display and use destination tourism material produced by Council such as brochures and banners and by providing access to the tourism website eurobodalla.com.au.
- Wi-Fi must be made available by the operator in the Visitor Information Centres in Batemans Bay and Narooma for use by tourists and others.
- In the Narooma Visitor Information Centre and Lighthouse Museum, applicants must consider the safekeeping of the light which is a heritage item and other items in the museum which are on loan by agreement from various members of the public and the Narooma Historical Society.
- An EOI may be accepted from individual, business or incorporated organisation or association that may not operate the Visitor Information Centre at a profit initially.

Economic Development Employment Potential

Tourism is the key economic driver in Eurobodalla and the largest industry sector for employment, generating around 3500 or almost 30% of all jobs. For the four year average to the year ending September 2014, Eurobodalla's Visitor Economy was valued at \$388 million. (Source: Tourism Research Australia (TRA) National Visitor Survey YE Sept 2014, CPI; profile id community profile; ABS 2009-2009)

Financial

If a new model for managing visitor centres is implemented, and ongoing savings are made, funds may be reallocated to fund tourism marketing activities in the web and digital environment, and to fund priorities in the Tourism Destination Management Plan.

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The opportunities and constraints of the Batemans Bay and Narooma sites have been investigated and both are deemed suitable for the continuation of visitor centres for three years.

Community Engagement

Extensive community engagement was undertaken during the exhibition period which extended for six weeks.

Unfortunately some of the engagement process was marred by misinformation spread in the community that Council was considering closing the existing visitor centres, rather than considering alternative ways to provide visitor information services.

This misinformation led to uncertainty among the community about what the proposed model was. As an example, in one submission the writer identified that they hadn't read the proposal and were writing their submission based on what they had heard from other sources.

This report and its recommendations support the feedback from more than 80% of people who made submissions who stated that they want physical Visitor Information Centres in Eurobodalla.

Submissions from the public exhibition

Community members made 49 submissions about the proposal, including three late submissions.

- Some submissions stated that they opposed the proposal, but went on to suggest items that were in the proposal as things Council should consider. Eg 'What about solutions like renting out café space or handing operations over to Chambers? Were they looked at at all by this consultancy?'
- 11 submissions (22.45%) responded to the media suggestion that the Visitor Information Centres would be closed (eg, 'I am aware of the impending closure of the Narooma Visitors Centre'; 'I write with reference to the extraordinary decision by Council to close Narooma's Visitors Centre'; 'I urge Council to keep it open'), rather than giving feedback about the proposal.
- 6.12% supported some parts of the proposal and opposed other parts.
- 8.16% supported the proposal.
- 8.16% neither supported nor opposed the proposal.
- 22.45% opposed closing Visitor Information Centres in Eurobodalla.
- 55.11% opposed the proposal (51.02% original submissions and 4.08% duplicate submissions).

Common items that were raised in submissions include:

1. General statements that:

- over 80% of people who made submissions stated that they want physical Visitor Information Centres in Eurobodalla
- Visitor Information Centres directly increase visitor spending in Eurobodalla

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- the streams outlined in the proposal could be useful additions to Visitor Information Centres, but could not replace a physical centre that provides face to face service
- face to face services are essential, local knowledge and experience may not be replicated online or through a call centre
- the \$367m return on investment for the tourism industry (2013) it is worth Council's \$1.2m tourism budget
- volunteers could be useful to support staff, but not to run a visitor information centre
- volunteers would require ongoing training and development and the costs of this were not clear in the proposal

2. Concerns that:

- there is no evidence to suggest that the current model for delivering visitor information services is not working
- many people who made submissions believe that Council has already made a decision to either withdraw from visitor centres or close visitor centres altogether
- the community should have been involved earlier, before a model was proposed
- a private operator of a visitor information centre could be biased or show favouritism to particular tourism operators
- a not for profit organisation would struggle to maintain a viable service and Council would need to provide some financial support
- there is no research or evidence to support that the proposal would be effective
- 'grey nomad' travellers do not or would not want to use technology to seek visitor information
- visitors who have limited English would find call centres difficult to use
- call centres are unsatisfactory

3. Suggestions that:

- any changes to the current model would require a transition plan, including costs of providing support to a new Visitor Information Centre operator, ongoing training to volunteers, and staff redundancy costs if relevant
- if another operator is identified, Council should work collaboratively with that operator to coordinate ongoing services
- Council continues to engage with tourism operators/businesses that may be impacted by changes
- Council should arrange training opportunities for a prospective operator/staff about the Australian Visitor Information Centre accreditation process and requirements
- Council should maintain some level of oversight to ensure any other operator provides impartial advice and is accountable.

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During the exhibition period, Council held four information sessions about the proposal at Chamber of Commerce and Women in Business meetings across Eurobodalla. The sessions were open for the community to attend.

Council held two independently facilitated industry workshops that were open to people who view themselves as part of the tourism industry to attend.

26 people attended the workshop at Batemans Bay on 23 April 2015 and 15 people attended the workshop at Narooma on 24 April 2015.

The key concerns and issues raised that should be considered by Council that related to the proposal were grouped into four areas.

1. **Commitment to tourism** – Council should confirm its commitment to tourism and that this proposal is not a ‘backdoor’ way to cut the budget.
2. **The process** – a transition plan should be developed - the process appears to be rushed and this could create risk.
3. **Governance issues** – Council needs to consider how it will manage and ensure neutrality and quality of the service if outsourced, and who should be allowed operate it. Council needs to continue to oversee the service.
4. **Fairness** – there is concern about existing staff and a desire to accommodate them by giving them preference in any new arrangement.

Council informed the community about the information sessions, workshops and the proposal being on exhibition through:

- 4 media releases on 19 March x2, 26 March, and 14 April
- 3 articles in Council’s tourism e-newsletter on 18 March, 19 March – special edition about the Visitor Services Proposal, and 30 April
- 1 article in Council’s Eurobodalla news online on 21 April
- 1 regular post and 1 boosted (paid to increase reach) post on Facebook on 24 March and 15 April.

Petitions

Following the exhibition period, some 2000 signatures on two petitions which were presented to Councillor Innes on 29 June 2015 and registered by Council on 31 July 2015.

The two petitions stated:

1. The following signatories totally oppose the ESC proposal to implement a new model for delivery of Visitor Services in Eurobodalla Shire.
2. Eurobodalla Shire Council are proposing to close all visitor centres in our shire. If you are against the closure please sign our petition.

These petitions are to be tabled for Councilors’ information.

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CONCLUSION

Seeking Expressions of Interest for a more efficient way of delivering services at the Batemans Bay and Narooma Visitor Information Centres Visitors is an opportunity for Council to respond to and address community feedback that physical Visitor Information Centres in Eurobodalla should remain. It is also a way for Council to address the findings of the Organisation Service Review Visitor Information Centres report PSR14 that formed the basis for Council resolving to seek an alternative and more efficient model for the delivery of visitor information service, and to progress independent advice from My Travel Research that Council should allocate a greater proportion of the existing budget to the web and digital environment, and that Council needs to move to embrace the digital economy.

A change in the way the centres are managed is not expected to have any impact on service delivery or the customer experience as an Expression of interest would set out the centres must continue to be operated as Level 2 or 3 centres accredited under the Accredited Visitor Information Centres (AVIC) framework. Both centres are currently operated as Level 2 AVICs.

Visitor Services Proposal submission summaries

#	Summary
1	Oppose: significant bookings come through the visitor centre compared to other sources; Current model is working. No research to support proposal options.
2	Oppose: Has Council considered renting out café space or handing over operations to Chambers. Need a transition plan, in consultation with local operators.
3	Oppose closing visitors centres: If changes are needed, start at upper management level. The centres need 1 overall manager and a centre manager each to roster staff.
4	Neither oppose nor support, with suggestions: library is not in a suitable location. Not-for-profit organisation would find it difficult to manage the Visitor Centre without some financial support from Council
5	Oppose closing visitors centres: face to face is more satisfactory than online or call centre, especially for visitors with limited English. Internet blackspots will cause difficulty. Private operator could be biased. Staff's local knowledge might not be on websites. Mobile/pop-up targets limited groups. Visitor services result in repeat visits. Some volunteers could reduce costs.
6	Oppose closing visitors centres, oppose call centre.
7	Oppose closing visitor centres: Young people look online but the majority of Narooma visitors are 'grey nomads' who enjoy face to face contact. Give the community an extension of time for submissions to come up with alternatives.
8	Oppose closing visitors centres.
9	Oppose closing visitors centres: Face-to-face service is invaluable. Online searches do not show local knowledge. Not everyone wants to use digital search methods, eg retired demographic.
10	Oppose closing visitor centres: Other remote Australian areas successfully operate fully accredited visitor centres. Volunteers are not reliable, not available, not objective, eg promote their own businesses. Of 101 visitor centres in Western Australia only 2 make a profit, others are not concerned about making a loss because the services are seen as necessary to the community.
11	Oppose: \$367m (2013) tourism industry return funds infrastructure and business, it is worth \$1.2m cost. Specific suggestions for services visitor centres should provide.
12	Support: tourism operators could set up their own Tourism Council to manage visitor services. \$1.26m would be better spent on core Council operations.
13	Oppose: Councillors have already made a decision. Concern about staff jobs. Face to face services are essential. Telephone service are not suitable for visitors with limited English. Visitor centre foot traffic numbers were taken during the global financial crisis when visitor numbers were down. Close the Batemans Bay centre and use the pop up service there, direct the funds to Narooma centre.
14	Oppose: lots of people don't use technology. Cut back on staffing other departments, look at grants to continue to fund the visitor centres. Private operator could be biased.
15	Oppose closing visitor centres: Use a combination of online and face-to-face services. Young people search online but middle aged and older people use physical services. Economic benefit and goodwill outweigh the potential cost saving of closing visitor centres.
16	Oppose and support different parts of proposal, with suggestions: Online information cannot replace face to face. One paid staff member should lead volunteers. If a private group run the centres, they must not be biased. Council should still oversee running visitors centres or at least monitor and be answered to to ensure impartiality.
17	Oppose: Call centres are disliked and impersonal. Random mobile van is not good enough for a town of Batemans Bay's size. \$367m return/year is worth providing visitor centres.

Visitor Services Proposal submission summaries

#	Summary
18	Support, with suggestions: mobile/pop up takes the service to the people. Vehicle should be 'special' and capture attention. Batemans Bay visitors centre land is valuable and could be better used commercially. The centre would serve the town better if it were relocated to a less expensive/more efficient site. Toilet facilities must be kept clean at all times.
19	Neither oppose nor support: want to ensure that the heritage and lighthouse displays at Narooma visitors centre will be safe if the centre management changes.
20	Oppose closing visitor centres: Tourists look for a Tourist Information Centre building, not a temporary facility that changes location. A temporary centre at shows or expos may have some merit but could be costly. Not for profit organisations may not running a visitor centre attractive or feasible. The Batemans Bay centre is ideally suited as a Tourist Centre but isolated as a retail option.
21	Oppose: Changes/decisions made before consultation and exhibition. Need an independent review of the statistics used to support the proposal. My Travel Research report is biased towards digital technology. Visitor centres result in increased spending. Local knowledge cannot be replicated through a call centre or online. Charter boat operators rely on information centre for business.
22	Oppose: Businesses will be adversely affected if this service is not properly staffed. Older visitors do not always use technology, they prefer physical centres and personal interaction. All the tourism places already have their own websites. Return generated by the industry is worth the cost. A new operator may be biased, compete with existing struggling businesses. Decrease costs by using volunteer staff to assist permanent staff; removing expensive booking system; expanding membership base of the Eurobodalla Coast Tourism association. Explore further: how many new visitors use the centre; accurate footfall count; a questionnaire in the Centre to determine satisfaction with the service.
23	Oppose: Narooma visitor centre is poorly signposted. Lighthouse display should be publicised better. Instead of withdrawing from visitor information centres, Council should increase the tourism budget to cover online expansion and fund this by reducing cars provided in staff employment packages.
24	Support and oppose different parts of proposal with suggestions: Council should: conduct a cost-benefit analysis of ratepayer funds spend on visitor services; research visitor and operator wants and needs before making changes; seek a partner to operate the centre but Council should still be the responsible authority for accountability and provide some funding. Existing staff should have first option of engagement with the new partner on a 6 month trial. Pop-up/Visitor hubs could help during peak season when centres are closed. Ambassador program is a good idea for the whole shire.
25	Oppose: issue lacks transparency, has been rushed, disregards community concerns. Question Clr's integrity. Privately run visitor centres could be biased, are often fronts for monopolised travel companies.
26	Oppose closing visitor centres: Visitors centres promote the local economy. Closing visitor centres will reduce Tourism and increase unemployment. Many 'grey nomads' do not have internet access. Closing centres will tell travelers that Council does not want them in Eurobodalla.
26	Neither oppose nor support: seeking more information about Council facts vs rumour

Visitor Services Proposal submission summaries

#	Summary
27	Neither oppose nor support, with suggestions: Batemans Bay visitor centre should be better signposted; Visitor centres should be the drop off and pick up point for all bus coaches; Batemans Bay toilets are filthy and will turn off any visitors who you do manage to attract.
28	Oppose: Council has already made a decision. WiFi spots will not help visitors who want to talk to real people. Stop building viewing platforms, direct savings to Visitor Centres. Based on the return for the industry, \$1.2m dollars is a good investment to keep the Centre open. Top-up funding with grants. Use part of proposed SRV increase to continue staffing the centre.
30	Oppose: Council withdrawing from visitor information centres will increase unemployment, be unpopular. The tourist information and booking service are vital to local business, an example of positive Council customer service. It is impossible to measure intangibles aspects like staff friendliness and knowledge with statistics. To reduce costs, Council should: relocate the core services to smaller, affordable location; remove souvenirs, galleries, historical displays from visitor centres.
31	Oppose: Put a decision on hold for 12 months and get more information/research, ie detailed review of current model, cost-benefit analysis to economy, consultation, potential impact on economy. No evidence of problems with current model. Proposed models are good ideas as additions to Visitor Information Centres, not replacements. Visitors want face to face knowledge. Visitor centres result in increased spending. Question figures in Council's report, eg door count, cost of volunteer training and development, number of phone calls, email and web traffic. No other local governments across Australia are withdrawing. VICs are an economic driver, should not be expected to be financially self-sufficient. Libraries are not suitable. Volunteers led by professional staff can successfully deliver visitor services if Council train, develop their skills and manage them. The Lighthouse Museum at Narooma VIC has been overlooked.
32	Oppose: Council has terminated booking service without consulting tourism operators. Make all costs, profit and loss available to the community and extend time for us to evaluate financial viability of keeping the current model.
33	Oppose: Proposal contains too many unknowns, no solid facts or proposed budget for the \$60K digital marketing strategy, no details of Expressions of Interest contracts or contingencies. Pop-up service and call centre to deal with overflow would be valuable as an addition to current centres, not a replacement. Accommodation providers already have Information Hubs for guests. Volunteers or library staff should not be used. WiFi at the library should come from the library budget. Council should provide WiFi at Narooma VIC.
34	Oppose: Face to face/local knowledge is valuable. Concerns that volunteers would be coordinating new model, call centre, pop ups.
35	Oppose: incorporate one or two of the proposed items into the current model. Proposed model is unproven. Visitor centres result in increased spending. People want in-person information. Phone coverage is a concern for web-only based information. Report has inadequate figures: depreciation, vehicle at 70c per km; Cost to Council to provide support to a new operator; Call centre number of staff, cost, knowledge. Revenue from bookings and memberships, \$65,000+ will be lost. Current model would work with greater liaison between council, VIC staff, and tourism operators.
36	Oppose: current model is working

Visitor Services Proposal submission summaries

#	Summary
37	<p>Oppose: Lack of consultation with stakeholders. Continue to operate visitor centres and increase the tourism budget. Visitor centres result in increased spending. \$367m and employment generated is a good return on \$1.2m budget.</p> <p>Proposal lacks transparency, eg what are \$264,917 'other operating costs' and 'overheads'?</p> <p>Staff will be made redundant, loss of experience and knowledge. Call centres are not satisfying/valuable. Private operators could be biased, struggle to meet operating costs. Narooma VIC was built by the community with the understanding council would staff the centre and maintain the building.</p>
38	<p>Oppose, with suggestions: A loss is acceptable compared to return in visitor spending, repeat visits. Ask visitor centre staff to formally submit ideas. Implementing new website lacked consultation. Wait 12 months to try new ideas before making a decision. Local businesses and council should work together to attract more visitors.</p> <p>Save costs by changing opening hours, combining staff and volunteers. Volunteers must be trained, impartial. Maintain 10% commission for bookings through visitor centres. Use touch screens at the centres to take bookings with staff assistance, will reduce money handling and save time.</p>
39	<p>Oppose: Council must achieve the best results for dollars spent. There is no research into the economic impact or possible success of proposal. Pop-ups and mobile service are useful supplements to Visitor Centres, not replacements. Call centre would limit the knowledge and experience, be unpopular. Gain further feedback before making a decision. Visitor centres in Western Australia are funded by councils, accepted that they run at a loss because the service is essential.</p>
40	<p>Oppose closing visitor centres: private enterprise would be biased. Visitor centre staff have local experience and knowledge, can't be replicated on websites. The only alternative to current model would be a council run and managed services supplemented by volunteers.</p>
41	<p>Oppose: Inadequate consultation, more time is needed to find ways to make the Narooma Centre more viable; Council should wait for the VIC authority's current survey reports before making a decision. "Focus on Narooma" subcommittee of Narooma Chamber of Commerce was not consulted. A website named 'Eurobodalla' would not attract visits, a 'Narooma' website would. A Wollongong model similar to the proposal closed after a short period. Call centres are unsatisfactory.</p>
42	<p>Oppose, with suggestions: Visitor centres result in increased spending. Visitor centre staff have not been consulted, nor their knowledge and experience utilised. Council should recruit a Tourism Manager responsible for only one portfolio. Council should consider economic impacts of relocating Batemans Bay centre.</p> <p>Concerns: Single staff member rostered to call centres/mobile van are a WHS risk. Independent provider could be biased. Tourism operators market their own services ineffectively and need a coordinated approach. Mobile/pop up should be an addition to visitor centre, not a replacement. Wi Fi access is a good idea, internet blackspots could impact. Report statistics are inappropriate/inaccurate. Current marketing campaign drives all activity to visitnsw.com, actively preventing potential visitors from using 1800 phone service & website.</p> <p>Suggestions: Batemans Bay visitor centre could: Merge with a current café/business/community centre/be moved to vacant block. Provide WiFi, souvenirs, information/noticeboards, ticket sales, lockers, caravan parking, host call centre/website staff and 1 visitor staff member. Change operating hours. use trainees rather than volunteers.</p>

Visitor Services Proposal submission summaries

#	Summary
13	Oppose: Duplicate of submission #37
14	Oppose: Keep the existing model. If any changes occur, need a costed transition plan. If Council cannot make a profit, a private operator can't either. The report's figures were taken during the GFC. Call centre: will not be satisfying for international visitors with limited English; too expensive to call from a mobile. Not all 'grey nomads' use technology. Close Batemans Bay visitor centre and redirect funds to Narooma.
15	Oppose: Previous suggestions from visitor centre staff have been ignored. Enhancing digital presence is important, but cannot replace face to face services. Current digital marketing is working fine. Visitor centres result in increased spending. Visitors want local, neutral knowledge. Private operator could be biased. Want to see the cost breakdown of Council providing support to a private operator. Council should add services to visitor centres, including free WiFi Call centres already exist at Visitor Centres, Council should trial a 'contact centre' before making a permanent decision. Mobile/pop up is an addition, not a replacement. Use a low cost mobile option, ie stall at markets, major events/attractions.
16	(Late) Oppose: duplicate of submission #22
17	(Late) Oppose and support different items, with suggestions: Privatising public services does not work effectively. Any changes should be implemented slowly, with trials over peak seasons, and assessing cost effectiveness. Offer contact centre or mobile pop up operator positions to current visitor centre staff first. Cost of redundancies of current staff are not clear in the report. Prioritise installing Dump Points for caravan waste throughout Eurobodalla. Sell Eurobodalla Coast Tourism vacant premises in Queen St Moruya, estimated \$500,000 market value.
18	Support: Seek a tender to run visitor centres from not for profit organisations. Maintain 1.2m/year Tourism budget. Prioritise installing WiFi spots and identify/promote them. Consider reallocating \$143,000 savings to fund the recommendations from the 2011-20 Destination Management Plan review.
19	(Late) Support, with suggestions: Proceed cautiously; online technology is more consistent with the way visitors seek information. Physical information service for visitors is desirable, deciding what and how needs more discussion/consultation with businesses and tourism operators impacted. Suggestions: Seek expressions of interest from commercial operators to manage day-to-day function of Visitor Information Centres; Provide regular updates on proposal progress and provide consultation opportunities with the industry operators/representative bodies; Works with any Visitor Information Centre operator/provider to coordinate and deliver ongoing visitor services that Council provides, ie, streams identified in the proposal, including that format and materials of a pop-up service don't undermine the viability of visitor information centres; provide training arrangement for prospective provider/staff about the Australian Visitor Information Centre accreditation process and criteria.



A co-operative approach to securing the future of visitor information services in Eurobodalla via Tourism Industry workshops

Client: Eurobodalla Shire Council

Prepared by: Carolyn Childs, MyTravelResearch.com

Date: April 2015

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Contents

1. The need for workshops
2. Outcomes and Conclusions
3. About the workshops

The need for workshops

Beyond the workshops, the issue gained wider coverage

Bay Post MORUYA

Monday, 15 April 2015

Thursday, 24 April 2015

By Angela Bowler & Suzanne

No time to close visitor centres: Consultant

By Suzanne Bowler & Angela Bowler



EUROBODALLA Shire Council is not alone in its review of visitor information centres - consultants and tourism organisations around the world are questioning their relevance.

CEO of My Travel Research, Gerald Chubb, who is reviewing the relevance of Eurobodalla's visitor services, said whether the centres remained relevant was a hot topic for the industry internationally.

The council is undertaking the international consultation process in relation to changes to visitor services and facilities.



<http://www.batemansbaypost.com.au/story/3043891/no-time-to-close-visitor-centres-consultant/?cs=229>



Narooma News

Monday, 13 April 2015

Thursday, 24 April 2015

By Angela Bowler & Suzanne

Tourism discussions, industry player workshop

By Suzanne Bowler & Angela Bowler



EUROBODALLA Shire Council is not alone in its review of visitor information centres - consultants and tourism organisations around the world are questioning their relevance.

The council is undertaking the international consultation process in relation to changes to visitor services and facilities.

<http://www.naroomanewsonline.com.au/story/3044162/tourism-discussions-industry-player-workshop/?cs=1489#slide=2>

Recommendations and Conclusions

Overview of concerns and issues that should be considered by Council

Relating to the proposal

Commitment to Tourism

- Is this a backdoor way to cut the budget?
- There is a need to reaffirm Council's commitment to Tourism

What is the process?

- A consistent theme in both workshops was that the process was being rushed and that this created risk
- A clear recommendation from both was the development (and communication of) a transition plan

Governance issues

- The most important issue in the area of governance was around the **neutrality of** advice provided by any outsourced VIC provider
- At the same time, overall quality of service provision was raised as an issue
- It is important that the **EOI and its evaluation deal with these issues**
- Need also to reiterate that the option considered will be overseen by Council and that there are processes to manage service failure
- Who should be allowed to bid was an issue that provoked differing opinions

Fairness

- Concern over the welfare of existing staff was expressed and a desire that any new arrangement seek to accommodate them either by giving them preference for jobs or as a weighting factor in the EOI

Overview of concerns and issues

Other issues for TAC

Signage

- Signage in the area is felt to need improving both for VICs and the broader towns
- Desire for Council/TAC to explore this issue

Greater focus on marketing

- Change in VICs means a need to change marketing processes and to use marketing to support visitor servicing
- One concern is the focus on Eurobodalla rather than the individual destinations. Need to consider how budget can effectively support these under the Eurobodalla banner. Options to create a more consumer facing proposition was submitted as was a suggestion to split the budget between the key destinations (note MTR's recommendation is that this last idea is NOT adopted as our experience suggests that it is unlikely to be successful)

Ongoing need to engage community in tourism

- As the VICs transition, there is a desire to get greater community support for tourism and to make everyone in the community a tourism ambassador
- Council and TAC need an ongoing focus on this

Need to foster greater collaboration within the industry

- Feedback from many of the participants was that they welcomed the opportunity to be involved and saw value in greater cooperation

Value for money/Budgeting

- Questions were raised around how allocation / percentage of funds for visitor services v marketing are distributed
- This has been referred for discussion with TAC

Overview of concerns and issues

Areas for further communication

Tourism Advisory Committee and other communication channels

- There was little awareness or understanding of the Tourism Advisory Committee.
- In particular, their role in representing and acting as a communication channel for industry was not widely recognised
- Need to provide more information for/PR about the committee, its work and its members
- Similarly, not everyone was aware of the channels by which council raised awareness of tourism. It was suggested that this be given more prominence on Council website

Fairness and processes

- Concerns were expressed about both the EOI process (dealt with on Page 8) and the awarding of the digital contracts.
- Council confirmed that it had made available details on how the tendering process was conducted for the digital tender and how this is in line with Council policy. It offered to share this information with anyone who had not seen it if they contacted council
- Council confirmed that the full TOR for the EOI on the current proposal will be public and have had input from the TAC.

Overview of concerns and issues – Current VIC staff

Areas of concern
where there are legal
and ethical issues

- There were many questions around the role of the VIC staff both in the consultation on the changes and what happens to them going forward
- Clarification was provided that
 - All staff have been consulted as part of the review
 - Their ideas and input is valued
 - The service review is not premised on any negative views around the quality of the current service provision.
- In terms of future role and outcomes Council advised
 - It could not discuss specific outcomes for legal and privacy reasons. This is to protect staff and to avoid damaging uncertainty and anxiety
 - As it was possible to reveal outcomes within these legal and ethical requirements this would be done
 - A recommendation that any EOIs that focus on retention of current staff as either a requirement or a weighting factor has been forwarded to Council as part of this exercise and will be weighed alongside all other submissions

Recommendations from the Batemans Bay workshop brainstorming

More than 20 ideas were generated

These were sorted into 4 categories (see next section for categories)

• encourage repeat visitation
• explore focus for niche marketing
• educate broader community about benefits of tourism
• encourage the community to rediscover their own backyard including economic benefits
• encourage + facilitate multiple channels to provide visitor information + facilities
• transition plan
• recognise the importance of personal engagement
• acknowledge that tourism is also every council staff members' business

• Request tender for the running of VICs
• support those running VICs with profit preservation
• foster greater collaboration among tourism operators
• determine proportion of Council budget that goes to destination marketing and visitor information services
• continue to develop digital content + support operators + suppliers to develop their own digital pres
• facilitate activities to support this
• attend/represent Eurobodalla at shows within 6 hours creating face-to-face engagement +

• Consider governance/ownership of visitor services, i.e. committee?
• explore potential to encourage more/experienced providers
• encourage + support operators how to provide best practice visitor information services
• Propose to maintain budget
• improve signage
• provide Eurobodalla

Where ideas were duplicated participants worked as a team to craft a joint outcome

The final recommendations taken to Council from the Batemans Bay session were

- Ensuring a successful outcome from the EOI
 - Get the best – advertise the EOI nationally
 - Develop a transition plan to ensure that there is no interruption of service
- Focus on providing marketing support to visitor services
 - Support with print and other promotion
 - Promote Eurobodalla.com.au including with signage in region
- Don't use this as a backdoor to cutting budget
 - Council to confirm that the tourism budget will be maintained
 - Council to advise the allocation / percentage of funds for visitor services v marketing are distributed

• Advertise nationally for Expressions of Interest to run Visitor Information Centres

• Support successful parties to run the Visitor Information Centres with print + other promotion.

• Promote ~~www.eurobodalla.com.au~~ ^{the signs}

• Consider the governance model (e.g. committee) for Eurobodalla visitor information services

• Determine the proportion of Council's tourism budget to be spent on initially a) destination marketing = 20% b) visitor information services = 20%

• Develop a transition plan for any changes to how Eurobodalla visitor information services are provided

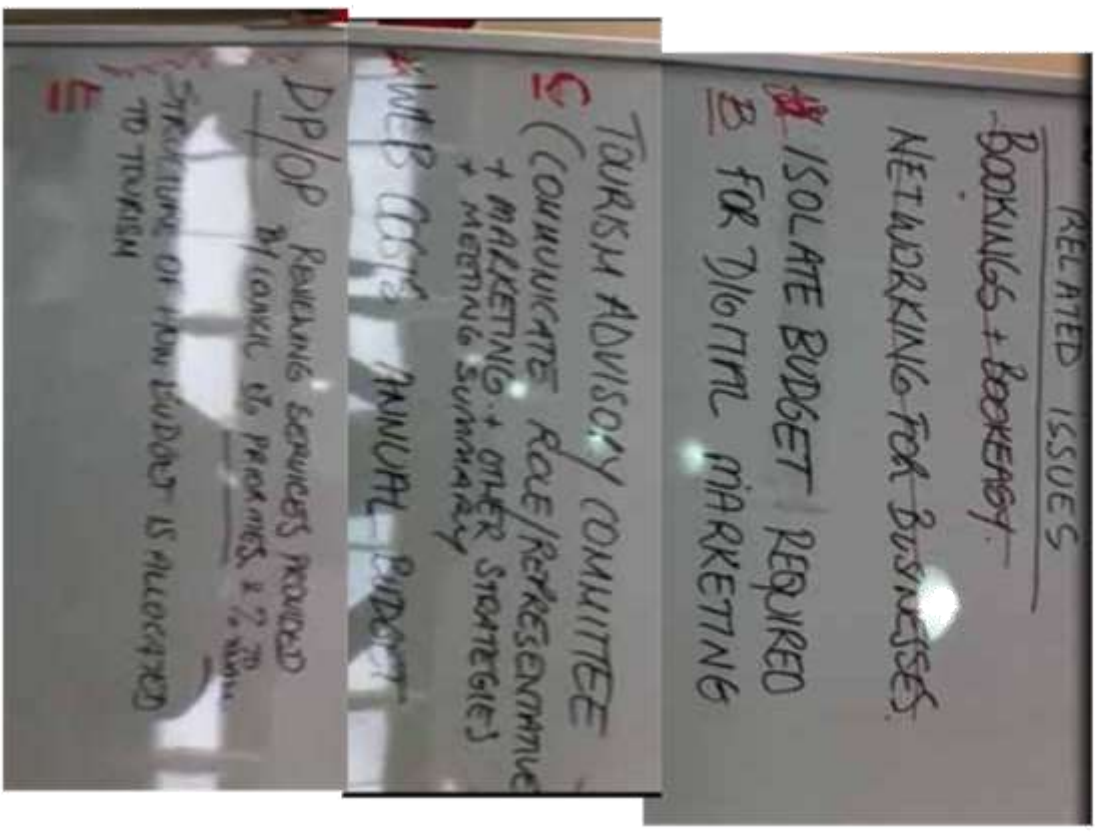
Key outcomes from the Narooma brainstorming (1) The same process was followed of categorising into 4 categories and working to synthesise overlapping concerns

• DECENTRALISE INTO THREE MARKETING CENTRES/VICS WITH SEPARATE BUDGETS.
• ES REMAINS THE CUSTODIAN
• EDI HAS STRICT TERMS FOR PARTNERSHIP WITH COUNCIL & NEW BUSINESS PLAN FOR VIC
• EXISTING STAFF CONSIDERED IN THE EDI

• IMPROVE TOURIST EXPERIENCE
• VICS SHOULD BE PROGRESSIVELY IMPROVED
• SIGNAGE SHOULD BE IMPROVED
• KEEP BOOKINGS SERVICES
• IMPROVE PROFITABILITY
• TAKE ANOTHER 12 MONTHS BEFORE DECIDING TO REVIEW/IMPACT STUDY/ANALYSE
• DEVELOP TRANSITION PLAN
• DETAILED COSTINGS OF EACH SECTION OF THE PROPOSAL
• IMPROVE CO-OPERATION & PERFORMANCE BETWEEN ALL TOURISM OPERATORS

Key outcomes from the Narooma brainstorming (2)

- The related issues were even stronger in Narooma
- Generally not felt to understand how the budget is allocated, especially with regard to digital marketing
- Lack of awareness and understanding of the role of the Tourism Advisory Committee



We suggest that Council develops an investment budget to improve the Narroona VIC in order to give the residents or tourists experience, putting in the building. ~~My - FY etc. we don't feel it needs to be within it~~

It is generating 47m - 47m of value added money to the economy. Council needs to find ways to make it more profitable - try the suggestions from the staff who work there & the community.

Retain a backing service in vcs under an agreed model which provides a revenue stream

Could he allocate a 12 month period which allows them to implement a transition plan that has been developed through research consultation?

Propagate – *“Using the community as the knowledge system, the knowledge of the Harbours Water Centre, a new partner and operator of the industry under their terms in a joint act. A new business plan, including a stake over/interaction with ongoing coastal fishing and overnight solid also be required. Existing staff should have two options of engagement with the new entity. The priority is to research a new research centre that not only services the community and provides the services that tourists seek when they arrive. The term knowledge does not mean a standard and static relationship, but rather the responsible authority for accountability, benchmarks and regular monitoring to ensure that the new operator is primarily offering value services to a highly professional manner that is acceptable to the community. Any expressions of interest and our island would need to cover all the commodities (tourism and existing staff) would be set at a request that with the new operator if they decided to stay on.”*

The teams in Narooma worked on crafting recommendations as follows (2)

Key themes from the Narooma workshop

- Quality control concerns
 - Aim to improve further the VIC experience – need to benchmark against best practice
 - Neutrality of service – how will this work in an outsourced model
 - Fear that this is an experiment. Concern about the transition leading to a desire for a transition plan or process
 - Concerns about loss of revenue if bookings are no longer accepted
- Human resources issues
 - Concern at loss of knowledge with existing staff
 - Perceptions of 'fairness' – existing staff should be a consideration in any EOI with preference or weighting given to those who offer existing staff jobs
- Value for money concerns
 - Lack of understanding of how budget is allocated. In particular, whether the investments in digital and the web are benchmarked
- Trust issues
 - Is Council committed to supporting tourism
 - Is there really a plan to close the VICs
- Tourism Action Committee role not well understood
- Marketing issue – No one has heard of Eurobodalla. How do we best use the place brands people have heard of (Narooma, Batemans Bay)

About the workshops

Who participated?

- Excluding Council Staff there were:
 - 26 participants in Batemans Bay
 - 15 participants in Narooma
- Full range of the industry was represented: attractions, tours, accommodation
- After careful consideration, it was decided that Visitor Information Centre staff would not be included. There were two reasons for this:
 - They were invited to make a separate submission focused specifically on their needs and views
 - There were concerns that industry might be inhibited in speaking out if VIC staff were present given the topic coverage
- A similar process was undertaken with the Tourism Team at Council. In the end the decision was taken to include them for the following reasons:
 - To provide briefing on what is and is not possible in the framework of Council decision-making (i.e. as an expert)
 - To support the facilitator by taking notes. This ensured that no additional external consultants were required thus keeping costs tight

The agenda for the workshops (agreed with Council) was:

Timing	What	Lead by	Approach	Outcome
30 minutes	Housekeeping and Context setting Recap on Proposals and findings if required Opportunity to define success from the session	Carolyn Childs/ Catherine Reilly	Presentation and consultation	Clearly understand what we are doing, rules to ensure all views are covered Create a 'safe' environment where views can be shared respectfully
60 minutes	Brainstorming exercise	Carolyn Childs	Moderated brainstorming	Develop ideas that can be developed into proposals Initially an individual exercise, people will then be invited to share their ideas and develop a 'long list' of ideas
10 minutes	Comfort break			
35 minutes	Shortlisting	Carolyn Childs	Eliminate duplicates Prioritise Then eliminate	Work out which ideas have greatest potential/strongest likelihood of success
40 minutes	Finalise wording	Carolyn Childs	Team work to develop wording Share and review	Firm submissions to council that can be taken forward
5 minutes	Wrap up/Review	Carolyn Childs/ Catherine Reilly	Review Summarise	Confirm what worked about the process

We agreed in advance ‘what would success look like’ and framed the task at the beginning of the workshop by outline ‘What are we here to do?’

To develop recommendations for council to offer the best means of delivering visitor information services for Eurobodalla Shire in terms of value for money for the Shire’s ratepayers and optimal outcomes for its tourism industry in achieving the goals in its destination management plan.

These slides were shown to participants to inform and engage them in the process

Start thinking about

What are the critical factors that will enable us
to meet this objective?
It might be about how we work together, what
we cover or the outcomes we consider

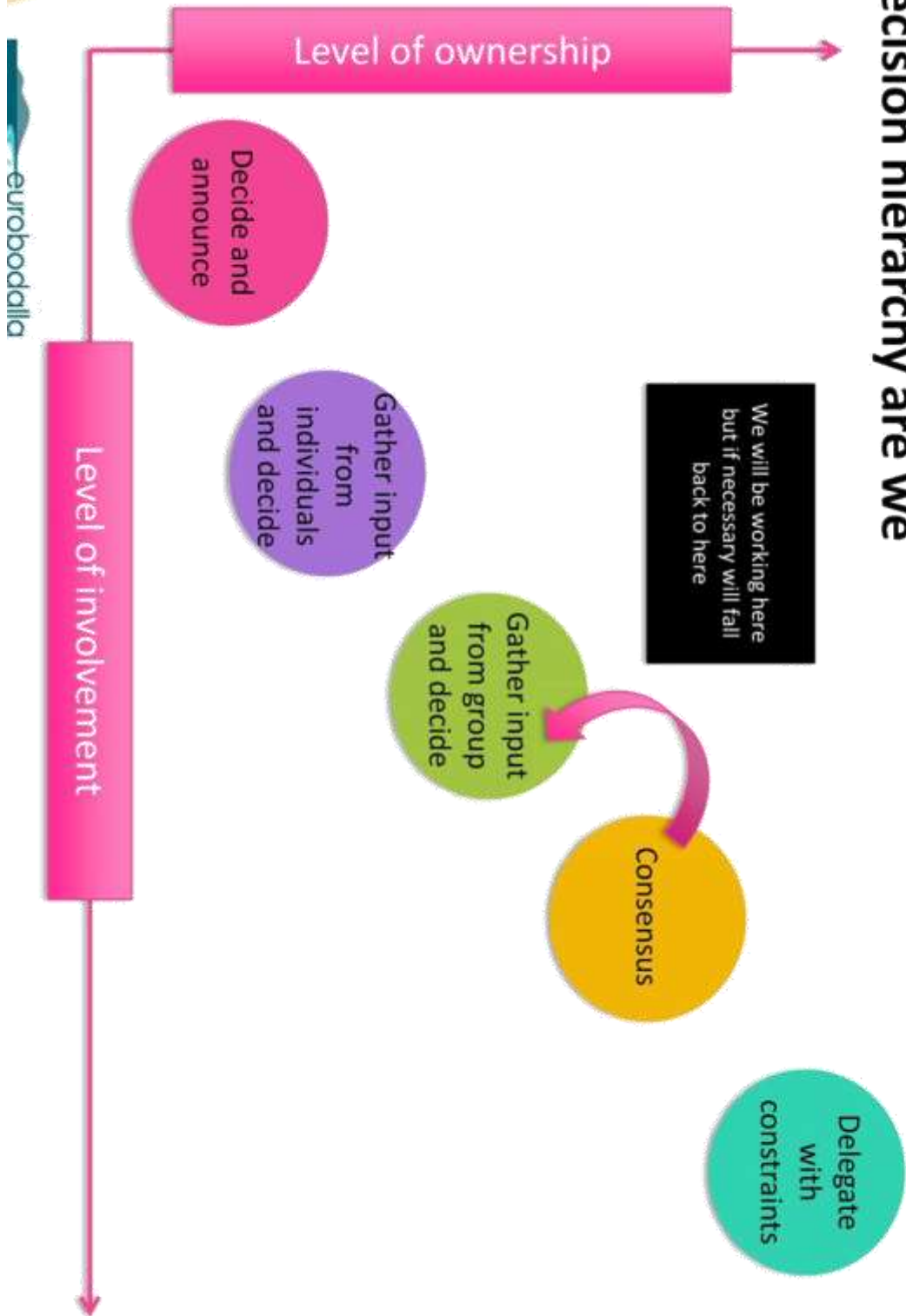
These slides were shown to participants to inform and engage them in the process

Background briefing

- Why did Council embark on this journey?
- What happens next – including with the recommendations we develop?
- Catherine Reilly with now brief us on this?

These slides were shown to participants to inform and engage them in the process

What we are trying to achieve – where on the decision hierarchy are we



These slides were shown to participants to inform and engage them in the process – this area was done to ensure that we did not ignore any concerns that might benefit tourism but were outside the scope of the council proposal

We have four 'buckets' for outcomes

Directly relates to current proposal

- Proposals will be forwarded to Council for consideration as part of this exercise

Supports growth of the Visitor Economy or Economic Development

- Proposals will be submitted to the Tourism Action Committee for consideration as part of the broader strategic review

Subjects of concern that do not directly relate to either of the above

- All such comments will be logged and the Tourism team at Council will provide written responses

Subjects of concern where there are legal or ethical restrictions on what can be publically discussed

- These will be acknowledged and a note of concerns logged. Feedback will be provided on reasons for not further action

These slides were shown to participants to inform and engage them in the process

The desired outcomes

- What they look like?
 - Brief, written statements
 - Specific and measurable
 - Nouns, not just verbs

e.g. Our recommendation is for Council to develop a contingency plan if no one tenders to run services that ensure these are available

These slides were shown to participants to inform and engage them in the process

Recap

- Consultation process so far
- Any questions about the research or the consultations?

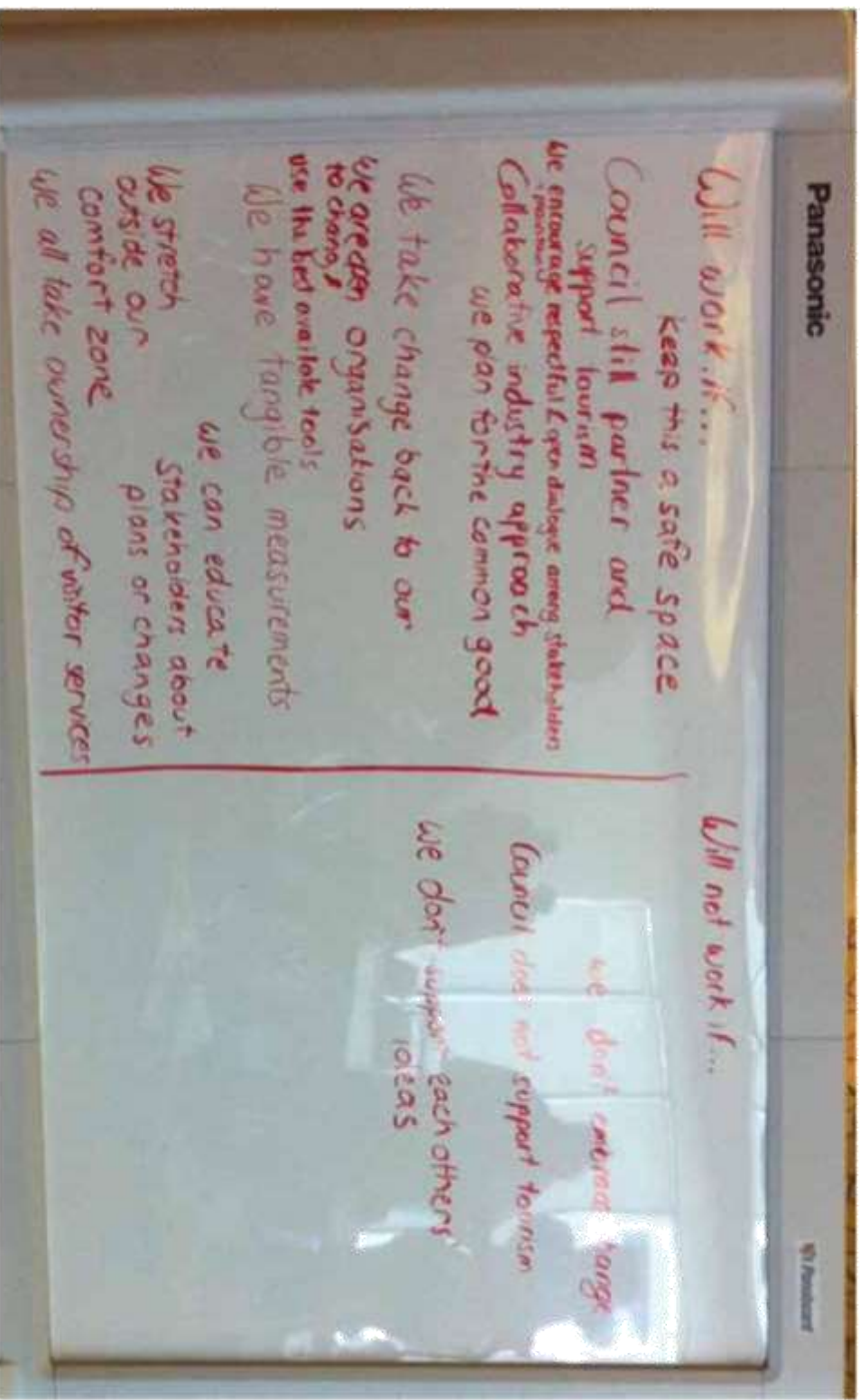
These slides were shown to participants to inform and engage them in the process. This slide was used to set ground rules

So what does success look like?

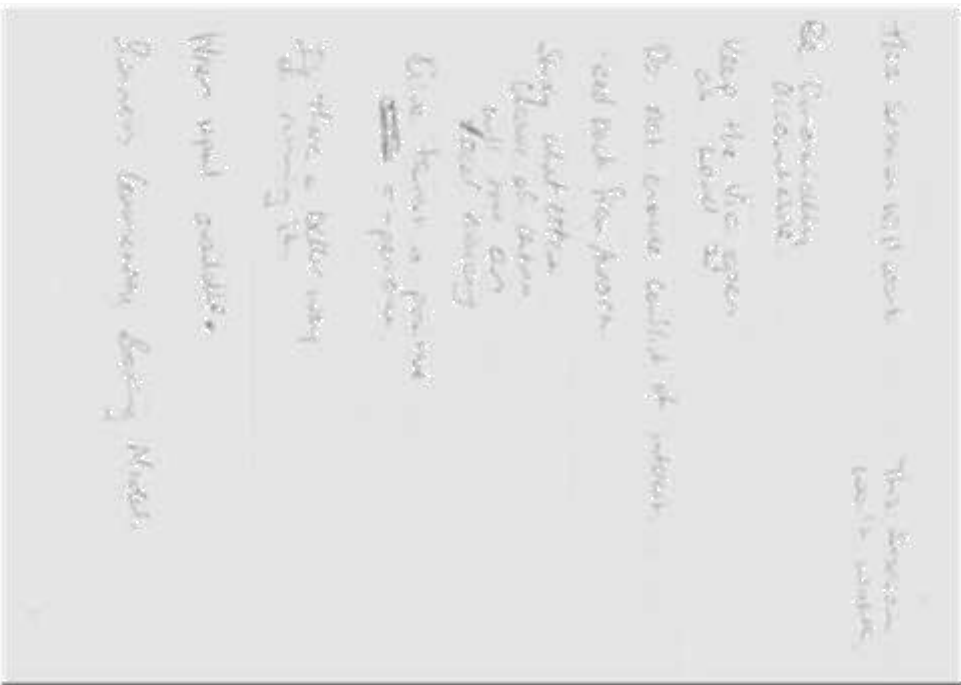
This session will work if..

This session will NOT
work if..

The idea is to create a safe and constructive space to operate in. Here is what we agreed in Batemans Bay



We didn't share these ideas in Narooma in quite the same way, but the exercise was conducted and body language was used to monitor this with engagement from all encouraged



These slides were shown to participants to inform and engage them in the process

Comfort Break

Check your watch
be back in 10
minutes from the
time on your watch



These slides were shown to participants to inform and engage them in the process

Brainstorming session



- 5 minutes to collect your own views/write them down
- What are the most important actions council should take to ensure a successful outcome?
- Write down and we will share
- Keep your notes!

These slides were shown to participants to inform and engage them in the process

Prioritising



1. Are there any duplicates/factors we can group?
2. Take a piece of paper and rank your top 3 (1st = most important)
3. Review and share
4. Agree a list
5. Option to play devil's advocate

These slides were shown to participants to inform and engage them in the process

Finalising

- Work in teams to draft statements
- Review with group and agree
- ... Or agree to differ





Disclaimer: Please note that the information and data contained in this proposal has been prepared for the specific purpose of addressing the items for the proposed research between **MyTravelResearch.com Pty Ltd** and **Eurobodalla Shire Council**.

It may not be suitable for other applications. The use of this data for any other purpose should be discussed with the lead author. MyTravelResearch.com accepts no responsibility for unauthorised use of this data by a third party.

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IR15/038 FUNDING OFFER - 2015-16 PUBLIC RESERVES MANAGEMENT FUND PROGRAM E13.7189

Responsible Officer: Warren Sharpe OAM - Director Infrastructure Services

Attachments: Nil

Focus Area: Productive Communities

Delivery Program Link: P1.2 Undertake advocacy activities to deliver major initiatives and infrastructure to support future growth

Operational Plan Link: P1.2.1 Advocate for improved infrastructure and funding to support regional initiatives

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 13 August 2013 Council resolved to form the Moruya Quarry Park Sunset Steering Committee to oversee the development of a design plan for Moruya Quarry Park.

In October 2014 the Committee presented the draft Moruya Quarry Park Landscape Plan to Council and Council resolved to put the draft plan on public exhibition. Following the consultation period, the Committee considered the feedback, presented the draft Moruya Quarry Park Landscape Plan to Council and Council subsequently adopted the Landscape Plan on 24 March 2015.

The Committee also sought Council's concurrence to extend the term of the Committee for a further 12 months to allow the Committee to work at securing grant funding for the project. Council subsequently extended the term of the Committee for a further 12 months.

Council has since been working with the Moruya Quarry Park Steering Committee to secure grant funding for Moruya Quarry Park.

On 7 August 2015 The Hon Niall Blair MLC, Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Lands and Water advised Council that he had approved a grant of \$60,000 from the NSW Government's 2015-16 Public Reserves Management Fund Program towards the upgrade of the BBQ and sheltered picnic area, bird proofing of the exposed rafters in the pavilion and construction of a new concrete path at the Moruya Quarry Wharf Reserve (Stage 1a).

This funding will enable Council and the Moruya Quarry Park Steering Committee to commence works on Stage 1a of the adopted Landscape Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT:

1. Council endorse action taken to secure the grant of \$60,000 from the NSW Government's 2015-16 Public Reserves Management Fund Program towards the upgrade of the BBQ and sheltered picnic area, bird proofing of the exposed rafters in the pavilion and construction of a new concrete path at the Moruya Quarry Wharf Reserve.
2. Council write and thank The Hon Niall Blair MLC, Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Lands and Water for approving the grant under the NSW Government's 2015-16 Public Reserves Management Fund Program.

IR15/038 FUNDING OFFER - 2015-16 PUBLIC RESERVES MANAGEMENT FUND PROGRAM

E13.7189

BACKGROUND

On 13 August 2013 Council resolved to form the Moruya Quarry Park Sunset Steering Committee to oversee the development of a design plan for Moruya Quarry Park.

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The Committee also sought Council's concurrence to extend the term of the Committee for a further 12 months to allow the Committee to work at securing grant funding for the project. Council subsequently extended the term of the Committee for a further 12 months.

Council has since been working with the Moruya Quarry Park Steering Committee to secure grant funding for Moruya Quarry Park.

The Public Reserves Management Fund Program provides financial support for the development, maintenance and improvement of public reserves. Public Reserves Management Fund Program allocates funds each financial year to reserve managers through a rigorous multi-level assessment process.

Council worked with the Moruya Quarry Park Steering Committee to lodge a grant application, under the Public Reserve Management Fund Program. The application was seeking funding for Stages 1a (\$70,994) and 2b (\$57,006) of the Landscape Plan.

CONSIDERATIONS

The Landscape Plan has been developed to allow implementation in stages as funding and resources become available.

Council applied for \$128,000 for Stages 1a and 1b of the Landscape Plan and was successful in obtaining funding of \$60,000 for Stage 1 works (the remainder of the \$70,994 for Stage 1a is Council's contribution which involves design, project management and administration).

The Public Reserves Management Fund Program offer stipulates that Council must accept this offer within two months of the date of their offer letter (3 August 2015). Therefore, this offer of funding has been formally accepted and this report seeks Council's endorsement of the actions taken to accept this funding offer.

Legal

Council is currently in the process of having this Crown reserve transferred to Council's care and control.

Asset

The grant will allow the renewal of a number of assets within the park which will contribute to the ongoing enjoyment of the facility.

IR15/038 FUNDING OFFER - 2015-16 PUBLIC RESERVES MANAGEMENT FUND PROGRAM	E13.7189
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Social Impact

Moruya Quarry Park will promote heritage and associated tourism linkages will be created back to Moruya CBD and other quarries.

The park will provide an inviting location for locals and visitors with improved accessibility and safety and will enhance the environment.

Economic Development Employment Potential

Moruya Quarry Park development enhances the heritage linkages to the region, recognizing the pivotal role the quarry played in providing materials to the iconic Sydney Harbour Bridge and other prominent buildings. The park is well utilized for fishing and recreational pursuits.

The proposed plan will significantly enhance these aspects providing the opportunity for inclusion in the heritage trail and to support growth in visitation to Eurobodalla.

This work further supports activities such as the Moruya Granite Festival.

Financial

Council's contribution towards this project is in kind and involves design, project management and administration and therefore a separate allocation of funds by Council is not required.

CONCLUSION

Grant funding of \$60,000 has been offered to Council under the NSW Government's 2015-16 Public Reserves Management Fund Program towards the upgrade of the BBQ and sheltered picnic area, bird proofing of the exposed rafters in the pavilion and construction of a new concrete path at the Moruya Quarry Wharf Reserve.

Endorsement of the actions taken by staff to secure the grant funding is recommended.

FBD15/066 ROAD WIDENING, MONTAGUE STREET, NAROOMA

94.7212.B

Responsible Officer: Anthony O'Reilly - Director Finance and Business Development
Attachments: 1. Confidential - Road Widening, Montague Street, Narooma
Focus Area: Support Services
Delivery Program Link: SS3.3 Provide administrative, technical, professional and trade services
Operational Plan Link: SS3.3.4 Manage Council property to achieve best value to the community

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The footpath area on the corner of Sheaffe and Montague Streets, Narooma is part of Lot 1 Section 13 Deposited Plan 758754, 22 Montague Street, Narooma. A reasonable set back to the road from the property boundary is required and land acquisition for road widening will resolve this issue.

The registered proprietor who wishes to fence his front boundary and who brought it to Council's attention has consented to the land being acquired.

This report recommends the land required be acquired in accordance with Council's Code of Practice for Acquiring Land for Public Purposes.

The name of the registered proprietor is set out in the Confidential Attachment.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT

1. All actions necessary be taken for the acquisition of land required for road widening within Lot 1 Section 13 Deposited Plan 758754 in accordance with Council's Code of Practice for Acquiring Land for Public Purposes.
2. All survey and legal costs associated with the land acquisition be borne by Council.

FBD15/066 ROAD WIDENING, MONTAGUE STREET, NAROOMA

94.7212.B

CONSIDERATIONS

A plan of the area proposed to be acquired are set out below.



Policy

The acquisition of land for road purposes will proceed in accordance with Council's Code of Practice for Acquiring Land for Public Purposes.

Asset

To legalise pedestrian access on the corner of Sheaffe and Montague Streets it will be necessary to acquire land for road widening.

Legal

A plan of subdivision dedicating the road widening will be required to be registered at the Land and Property Information Office to transfer the land from the current owner to Council as Public road.

Social Impact

The public expect the provision of footpaths for access within an urban location.

Financial

Compensation will be determined by a Registered Valuer in accordance with the provisions of the Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991. Together with the compensation, Council will be responsible for all costs associated with the acquisition including survey and legal fees and the registered proprietor's reasonable legal costs. Based on previous similar acquisitions sufficient funds are available within allocated budgets.

FBD15/066 ROAD WIDENING, MONTAGUE STREET, NAROOMA

94.7212.B

Community Engagement

The affected registered proprietor has been consulted and has consented in writing to the proposed acquisition for road purposes.

CONCLUSION

The acquisition of part Lot 1 Section 13 Deposited Plan 758754 is required for road widening purposes at the corner of Montague Street and Sheaffe Street, Narooma and should be acquired in accordance with Council's Code of Practice for Acquiring Land for Public Purposes.

FBD15/067 END OF YEAR FINANCIAL REVIEW

E15.9016

Responsible Officer: Anthony O'Reilly - Director Finance and Business Development

Attachments: 1. Under Separate Cover - Budget Amendments Report and Mayor and Councillor Expenses

Focus Area: Support Services

Delivery Program Link: SS1.1 Manage Council's financial assets and obligations

Operational Plan Link: SS1.1.2 Undertake forward budgeting and financial reporting

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to review the unaudited financial results for the year ended 30 June 2015 and the revoting of selected budget funds to the 2015-16 financial year.

The key points of this report are:

- Council has an unaudited year end operating surplus before allowing for capital grants and contributions of \$1.4 million compared to an original budgeted deficit of \$(2.65) million.
- Council has an unaudited year end operating surplus after capital grants of \$7.8 million compared to an original budgeted deficit of \$(0.2) million. The end of year result and favourable surplus position includes additional capital grants and contributions that were received of \$4.0 million. The total amount of capital grants and contributions during 2014/15 was \$6.4 million.
- The unaudited operating result before capital grants and contributions for General Fund (including Environment) is a deficit of \$(1.5) million compared an original budgeted deficit of \$(3.4) million. A surplus of \$2.3 million after capital grants and contributions is recorded.
- Waste, Water and Sewer Funds have unaudited operating surpluses both before and after capital grants and contributions. Forward budgets indicate that Water and Sewer are in a satisfactory financial position. The forward budgets for Waste Fund indicate a deficit operating position in the medium to long term.
- The financial sustainability of General fund is the key challenge facing Council into the future. In particular, ensuring that there is adequate funding to renew and maintain infrastructure to maintain service levels and meet the Fit for the Future benchmarks.
- Council's liquidity position is anticipated to be in line with Department of Local Government benchmarks.

FBD15/067 END OF YEAR FINANCIAL REVIEW

E15.9016

RECOMMENDATION

THAT:

1. The year-end budget review report for 30 June 2015 be received and noted.
2. Carry forward/revotes from 2014/15 into 2015/16 be adopted. The net amount of Council funds required to support the revotes in 2015/16 are :
 - a) General Fund \$973,717
 - b) Water Fund \$202,754
 - c) Sewer Fund \$159,043
 - d) Waste Fund \$496,135

BACKGROUND

Council reviews its performance and financial results against the adopted Operational Plan quarterly through the quarterly budget review statements. This report provides an indicative summary of the year's financial results for each of Council's Funds and the consolidated result.

It should be noted that the financial results referred to in this report are at this stage unaudited. Preparation of draft accounts for audit is in progress and these will be presented to Council and referred to audit at its October meeting. Final figures may differ materially as a result of audit adjustments and revision of estimates.

CONSIDERATIONS

RESULTS

Income Statement

Net surplus or deficit before capital grants and contributions

The net surplus or (deficit), being income received less expenses incurred, for each of Council's funds (business units within Council that are rated separately) and the consolidated result *before* capital grants and contributions is a surplus of \$1.4 million and all Funds, with the exception of General, recorded a surplus result (see Graph 1.1 below with further details provided in Table 1.1). This result can indicate whether Council is able to raise sufficient revenue to cover the operational costs (including depreciation, which measures the wear and tear of Council assets) of delivering its services to the community.

FBD15/067 END OF YEAR FINANCIAL REVIEW

E15.9016

Graph 1.1 Net surplus/(deficit) before capital grants and contributions

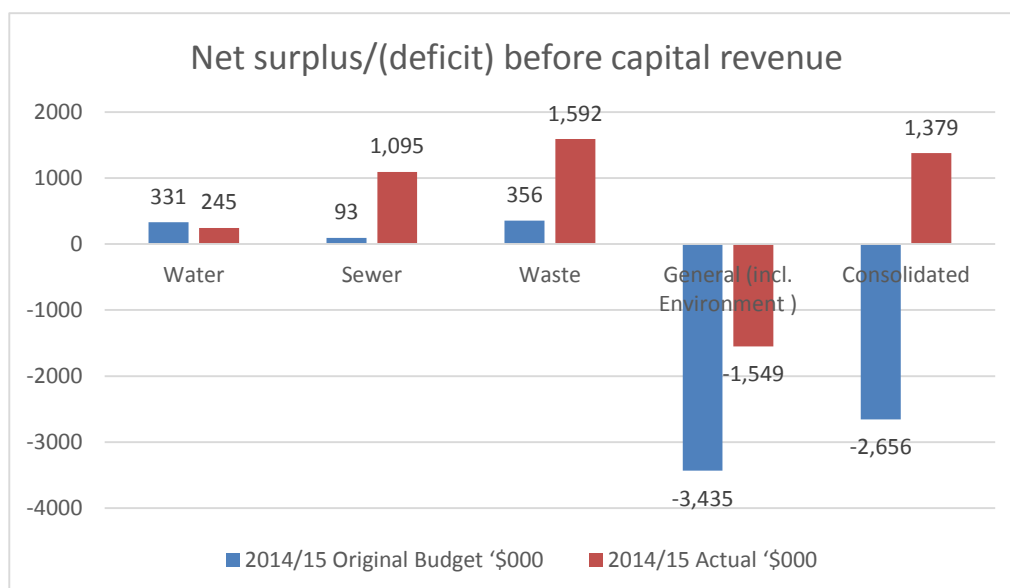


Table 1.1 – Net surplus/(deficit) before capital grants and contributions

Fund	2013/14 Actual ⁽¹⁾ '\$000	2014/15 Original Budget ⁽²⁾ '\$000	2014/15 Actual '\$000	2014/15 Variance '\$000	2015/16 Original Budget ⁽³⁾ '\$000
Water	(117)	331	241	(90)	798
Sewer	184	93	1,095	1,002	1,241
Waste	1,281	356	1,592	1,236	380
General (incl. Environment)	(4,271)	(3,435)	(1,549)	1,886	(924)
Consolidated	(2,923)	(2,656)	1,379	4,034	1,495

(1) Sourced from Audited Financial Statements 2013/14

(2) Sourced from DP/OP 2014/15

(3) Sourced from DP/OP 2015/16

Net surplus or deficit after Capital grants and contributions

Table 1.2 and Graph 1.2 below show the net surplus or (deficit), after capital grants and contributions, for each of Council's Funds and the consolidated result. This statement provides an indication of Council's overall financial performance. Capital grants and contributions are included in income. Capital expenditure such as the building or renewal of infrastructure is not included in this accounting statement.

FBD15/067 END OF YEAR FINANCIAL REVIEW

E15.9016

Graph 1.2 Net surplus/(deficit) after capital revenue

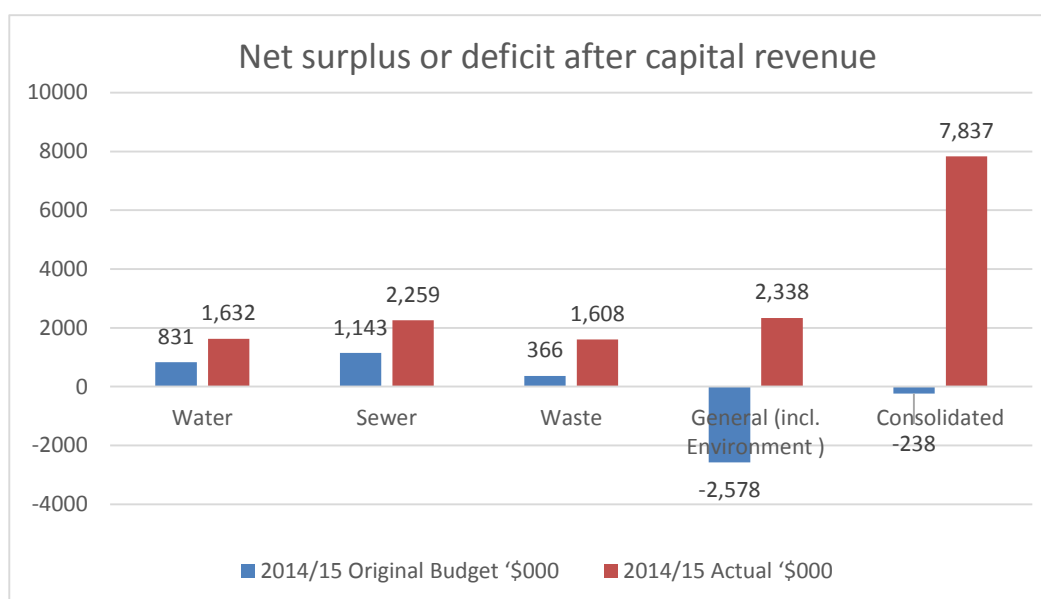


Table 1.2 – Net surplus/(deficit) after capital grants and contributions

Fund	2013/14 Actual ⁽¹⁾ '\$000	2014/15 Original Budget ⁽²⁾ '\$000	2014/15 Actual '\$000	2014/15 Variance '\$000	2015/16 Original Budget ⁽³⁾ '\$000
Water	593	831	1,632	801	1,798
Sewer	1,236	1,143	2,259	1,116	3,890
Waste	1,297	366	1,608	1,243	390
General (incl. Environment)	422	(2,578)	2,338	4,916	3,130
Consolidated	3,548	(238)	7,837	8,075	9,208

(1) Sourced from Audited Financial Statements 2013/14

(2) Sourced from DP/OP 2014/15

(3) Sourced from DP/OP 2015/16

All Funds finished in surplus with the consolidated result being a surplus of \$7.8 million after capital revenue. This was an overall improvement during the year of \$8.1 million compared to the original budgeted deficit of \$(0.2) million. All Funds at year end showed favourable results compared to their original budget position. Capital Grants and Contributions total \$6.4M for the year.

Some major contributors to this favorable surplus position include:

- additional user charges revenue of \$1.1 million from waste fees, camp grounds and caravan parks
- favourable investment revenue of \$0.3 million including an increase in the Southern Phone dividend, and cash and investment balances

FBD15/067 END OF YEAR FINANCIAL REVIEW

E15.9016

- additional other revenue of \$0.3 million including leases and licences, fines and recycling
- lower interest expenses of \$0.6 million
- savings in employee costs of \$0.7 million
- savings in insurance premiums and incentives received of \$0.4 million
- lower depreciation of \$1.2 million as a result of assets disposed of at 30 June 2014 (determined after the formulation of the 2014/15 original budgets)
- cost savings in Water and Sewer operational and maintenance budgets of \$1.9 million
- additional capital grants and contributions of \$4.0 million including \$1.6 million of additional developer contributions reflective of current development conditions and \$1.5 million of capital grants for transport
- additional operating grants and contributions of \$4.1 million including \$2 million transport, \$1 million Community services and \$0.6 million Environment.

Unfavorable variations of note include:

- corresponding expenditure associated with the additional operating grants and contributions received
- the estimated book value of infrastructure written off is \$3.2 million.

The estimated \$3.2 million loss on disposal of infrastructure assets represents the remaining value of infrastructure assets, in Council's books, which is required to be written off as the assets have been renewed during the year. The final movement will be determined when Council's asset teams complete their year-end procedures. It is difficult in some cases to assess the condition of some assets or the timing of their renewal and hence an accurate estimate of remaining useful life. For example water and sewer assets being underground makes it difficult to know when renewal is required. The depreciation calculation process is subject to ongoing review. The transport assets are scheduled for revaluation during 2015/16.

Fund Flow Statement

Council requires sufficient funds to pay for its debts as and when they fall due. The Fund Flow Statement shows the change in Council's freely available funds or working capital.

It includes all transactions having an impact on Council's funds i.e. income and expenses from its operating activities, capital programs and borrowing activities. It also includes the transfer into, or use of restricted funds for capital or non-recurrent projects. Depreciation is not included as it does not represent a cash flow.

FBD15/067 END OF YEAR FINANCIAL REVIEW

E15.9016

Table 1.3 – Fund Flow – net cash movement

Fund	2013/14 Actual⁽¹⁾ ‘\$000	2014/15 Original Budget⁽²⁾ ‘\$000	2014/15 Actual ‘\$000	2014/15 Variance ‘\$000	2015/16 Original Budget⁽³⁾ ‘\$000
Water	(673)	(1,573)	(450)	1,124	2,874)
Sewer	3,469	1,008	2,288	1,280	909
Waste	1,910	(641)	1,586	2,227	(764)
General (incl. Environment)	6,278	1,565	1,760	196	(3,479)
Consolidated	10,985	358	5,184	4,827	(460)

(1) Sourced from Council accounting records

(2) Sourced from DP/OP 2014/15

(3) Sourced from DP/OP 2015/16

The original budget for 2014/15 estimated an increase in unrestricted funds of \$0.3 million. By year end the figure was \$5.2 million which is \$4.8 million favourable. All funds reported favourable variances. The 2015/16 budgets forecast a small outflow of funds, including \$2 million of Council’s cash reserves being used to fund part of the special rates variation capital program. Council’s unrestricted current ratio is expected to be above the Local Government benchmark of \$1.5 of current assets to \$1 of current liabilities. This indicates Council’s liquidity position is sound and is able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

The \$4.8 million favourable increase in unrestricted funds can be explained by the favourable variances explained for the Income Statement of \$8.1 million and the following adjustments:

- Increase in unrestricted funds due to
 - revotes of \$1.8 million from 2014/15 to 2015/16 due to carry forward of projects
- decrease in unrestricted funds due to
 - reduction in the borrowing program by \$1.6 million due to available unrestricted cash reserves
 - restriction of funds received from increased developer contributions, savings in the infrastructure renewal program, unspent grant funds received late in the year and the southern phone dividend.

Proposed Year-end Revotes

Revotes are the carry forward of budgets from one year to the next for the continuation or completion of projects. The figures in Table 1.4 below show the revotes recommended at year end. The table shows the total expenditure associated with works proposed to be carried forward to the 2015/16 financial year. The associated funding from sources such as grants, loan funds, developer contributions and other restricted cash sources is provided and of note is

FBD15/067 END OF YEAR FINANCIAL REVIEW

E15.9016

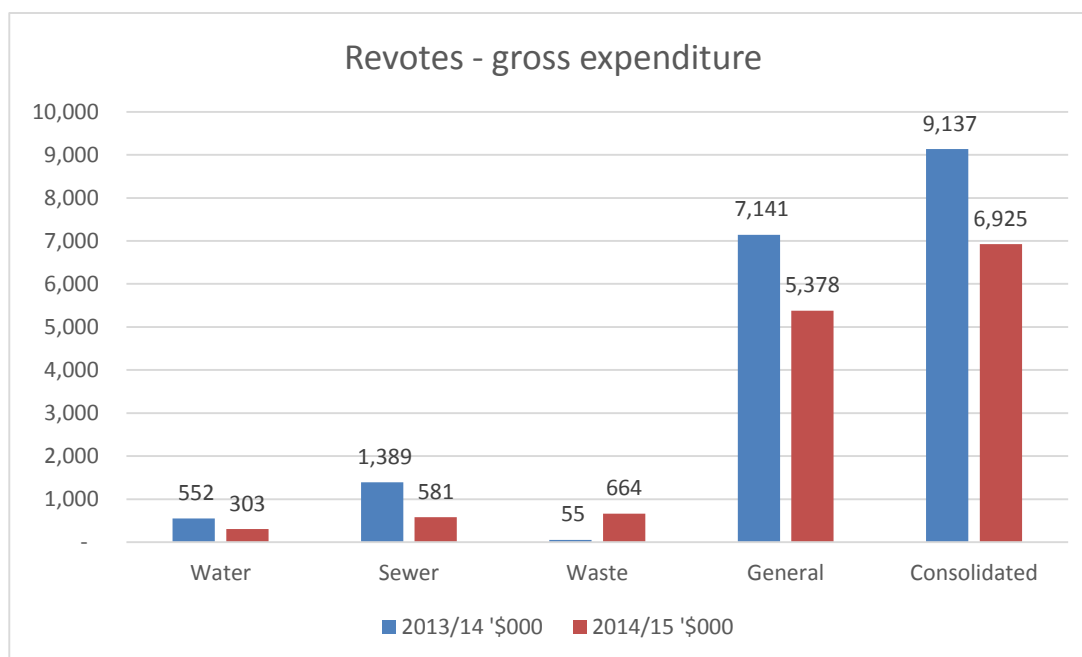
grants accounting for \$2.5 million of the funding. The amount of Council's unrestricted cash that is required to fund the works is also shown to provide a complete picture of the impact on Council's cash reserves of the proposed revotes.

Table 1.4 – Proposed 2014/15 year end revotes

Fund	Total Expenditure '\$000	Funding '\$000	Councils cash '\$000
Water	303	100	203
Sewer	581	422	159
Waste	664	168	496
General	5,378	4,404	974
Consolidated	6,925	5,093	1,832

Attachment 1 provides the details of all projects recommended for revote at financial year end. Revotes approved by Council from previous quarterly reviews during 2014/15 have already been included in the 2015/16 Operational Plan. In comparison the request for year end revotes 2014/15 is considerably less than on the previous year 2013/14 (see Graph 1.3 below). The gross expenditure revoted 2013/14 into 2014/15 was \$9.1 million dollars which had associated funding of \$6.9 million dollars and required \$2.2 million of Council cash.

Graph 1.3 – Revotes – Gross expenditure



FBD15/067 END OF YEAR FINANCIAL REVIEW

E15.9016

Accounting standards require grant funds to be recognised when they are received. Council typically receives additional grant funds from government agencies near the financial year end. These funds are generally revoted as they cannot be spent before the year end and sometimes the funds actually relate to projects scheduled in the next financial year. Some examples are Local Land Services funding for Eurobodalla Lantana Push Back of \$0.2 million, Country Passenger Transport Infrastructure Grants Scheme for bus shelters \$0.2 million and Infrastructure Grant funding from the State Library of NSW for library extension \$0.2 million.

Looking forward

The 2015/16 Operational Plan has a budgeted operating surplus, on a consolidated basis, before capital grants and contributions of \$1.5 million. After accounting for capital grants and contributions a consolidated surplus of \$9.2 million is forecast.

The General Fund (including environment) has a budgeted deficit of \$0.9 million before capital grants and contributions. The budgeted operating result after allowing for capital grants and contributions is a surplus of \$3.1 million.

The financial sustainability of the General Fund is always an area of focus and this has only increased with the release of the Fit for the Future program (which considers General, Environment and Waste Funds as the Council's general fund). The key challenge facing Council is ensuring that there is adequate funding to renew and maintain infrastructure so that service levels are maintained. The successful rates variation will assist Council in balancing the cost of delivering services against the income it receives.

The Fit for the Future indicators for infrastructure and service management show that more needs to be spent on renewals. Council's Fit for the Future strategy aims to redirect funds from dividends and savings into an infrastructure renewal fund, this coupled with borrowings will assist in addressing the infrastructure backlog and annual renewal requirements. The strategy aims to address all the Fit for the Future indicators within a ten year period.

The Waste Fund is forecasting operating deficits from 2016/17 onwards. There are cost pressures resulting from a significant capital expenditure program of \$15.2 million over the next four years. The program will impact depreciation and borrowing costs. The current situation of surpluses is not expected to continue and pricing decisions will require review in the short to medium term.

Water and Sewer Funds are expecting surpluses for 2015/16, both before and after capital revenue. Stable pricing paths are expected in both Funds for the short to medium term as a result of their sound financial positions. The Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy is currently being reviewed. The Long Term Financial Plan will be reviewed as part of this process during 2015/16. Both Water and Sewer Funds are anticipating significant capital works in the medium to long term and this may have impacts on pricing.

Other matters for consideration

The figures in this report are unaudited. The audit process is expected to be completed late October 2015.

FBD15/067 END OF YEAR FINANCIAL REVIEW

E15.9016

Legal

The previous quarterly budget review reports have been prepared in accordance with legislative requirements. There is no legislative requirement to prepare a June quarterly budget review report in accordance with Clause 203(1) of the Local Government (General) Regulations 2005.

Policy

The accounting policies being used are based on the audited financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2014.

The policy for fiscal responsibility requires the maintenance of reasonable financial health and sustainability. The 2014/15 financial results are compared to these requirements.

CONCLUSION

The consolidated result for 2014/15 is a surplus after capital grants and contributions of \$7.8 million compared to an original budgeted deficit of \$(0.2) million and a surplus before capital grants and contributions of \$1.4 million. Fund flows were favourable compared to original budgets.

The General Fund continues to be the focus of financial sustainability efforts. The Fit for the Future program provides a clear financial management strategy. Over the next ten years the achievement of operating surpluses, combined with a dividend strategy and borrowings will redirect funds and allow increased spending on infrastructure renewal programs. This will reduce the back log to within the Fit for the Future target range by 2024/25.

Water and Sewer Funds continue to operate with satisfactory financial health. Long term financial planning will need to monitor the impacts of significant capital projects in the medium term.

**CAR15/010 ACCEPTANCE OF FUNDING FROM DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL
SERVICES (DSS)**

L.0332

Responsible Officer: Kathy Arthur - Director Community, Arts and Recreation Services

Attachments: Nil

Focus Area: Liveable Communities

Delivery Program Link: L2.4 Undertake advocacy activities to improve collaboration, service availability, development and funding

Operational Plan Link: L2.4.1 Advocate for improved service delivery and increased levels of funding

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Department of Social Services has determined that Council's Community Care services are eligible for one-off funding of \$20,000 (inc. GST) to assist providers transitioning to the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP).

In order for the funds to be released, two copies of the funding agreement have to be signed, the seal of Council affixed and both copies returned to the Department by 20 September 2015.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council accepts the service system development funding of \$20,000 from the Department of Social Services and executes the agreement by signing and affixing the seal of Council.

BACKGROUND

The first stage of implementation of the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) commenced on 1 July 2015 and covers a four month transition period. During this time existing providers are expected to be undertaking services system development activities associated with CHSP implementation. This includes updating administrative and IT systems and processes to:

- meet the CHSP requirements;
- enable data entry into the DSS Data Exchange; and
- accept electronic referrals from the My Aged Care Regional Assessment Services.

CONSIDERATIONS

This funding is to assist with expenditure already incurred over the past few months, or for activities that are currently being undertaken to ready operations for the full implementation of the CHSP on 1 November 2015. The funds need to be expended by 31 October 2015.

Council's Community Care services have already commenced a detailed transition implementation plan, involving purchase of new modules required for their client database (The Care Manager -TCM) and additional technical services to support the upgrade and its implementation, including staff training. These funds can therefore contribute to these costs and be expended within the required timeframe.

**CAR15/010 ACCEPTANCE OF FUNDING FROM DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL
SERVICES (DSS)**

L.0332

Social Impact

The transition support funds for the CHSP transition and upgrade of Council client management systems will ensure that existing and potential clients are provided with accurate and timely information on their care activity and ensure service compliance with data exchange. Individuals and carers will have a greater choice, and importantly, control over the services and supports they require and who they receive them from.

Financial

These one-off funds will add \$20,000 to Community Care's service system support budget for 2015.

CONCLUSION

Council's Community Care is currently implementing actions contained in a comprehensive Business Strategy to prepare for and meet its obligations under the new Commonwealth Home Support Programme and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), when it is eventually rolled out in Eurobodalla. The one-off service system development funding offered by the Department of Social Services will provide funds and support to further supplement this process.

**DR15/035 2013 AUSTRALIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION
CONFERENCE**

**E91.3255;
E95.9421**

Responsible Officer: Danielle Brice - Councillor

Attachments: Nil

Focus Area: Collaborative Communities

Delivery Program Link: C1.1 Conduct the business of Council in an inclusive, responsive and transparent manner

Operational Plan Link: C1.1.1 Support the councillors in meeting their statutory obligations and roles as community representatives

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Councillor Brice represented Council at the 2013 Australian Local Government Women's Association Conference held in Gosford and now presents her delegate's report on that Conference

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Councillor Brice's delegate's report on 2013 Australian Local Government Women's Association Conference held in Gosford and in 2013 be received and noted.

BACKGROUND

Councillor Gabi Harding and Ms Kerry Foster, Director Community and Corporate Outcomes, and I attended the annual NSW Australian Local Government Women's Association State Conference. The conference was hosted by Gosford City Council 14 – 16 March 2013. The theme was SAND – Strong Actions New Directions.

The program speakers and presentations included:

Aunty Anita Selwyn – Welcome to Country

Aunty Anita Selwyn spoke about her experiences at school and discrimination. With seventeen years of study, sheer determination and perseverance, Anita graduated at University gaining a Bachelor of Community Management. Anita spoke about inspiration, knowledge, empowerment, strong actions, support and motivation.

**DR15/035 2013 AUSTRALIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION
CONFERENCE**

**E91.3255;
E95.9421**

Julie Griffiths, President ALGWA

Sixty years + for ALGWA – let's celebrate. Julie gave us a snap shot of the history of ALGWA and what ALGWA stands for today.

- ALGWA supports and promotes women in local government through Advocacy, Advice and Action;
- ALGWA Promoting women in local government.

Leonie Baldwin – Central Coast former Regional Co-ordinator and NSW Dept of Premier and Cabinet

Leonie was one of five women in Australia to be offered a Manager position. Leonie developed the first National Special Olympics and served as the Central Coast Regional Coordinator for nine ministers over thirteen years. Other positions held included Sport and Recreation, Wagga and Academy of Sports. Leonie stressed the importance of partnerships with the community.

Kath Roach – Managing Director Sinc Solutions and Detective Sergeant – Australian Federal Police

Kath encouraged the audience to work hard, have patience and long term strategic goals, stay focussed, deliver along the way, stand your ground, know the business of Local Government and know the components of the Community Strategic Plan. It was interesting to hear that women are rarely subject of a complaint in relation to conduct and ethics.

Leadership in Action – Grow Your Own Leaders – Gosford's Aspiring Managers Program
9 speakers - 6 were young people.

- **Colleen Worthy-Jennings** – Director of Economic and Community Development
- **Annie** – Typist – Planning Department
- **Shannon McKierman** – Coordinator Environmental Health and Protection
- **Peter Drew** – Senior Development Assistant Planner
- **Gillian Cullen** – Environmental Health Officer
- **Warren Murphy** – Coordinator Compliance Services
- **Sally Anderson Day** – Acting Manager Integrated Planning
- **Michelle Ritchie** – Acting Manager Business Services
- **Stephen Goodworth** – Advisor Building Surveyor.

Communicating with Confidence - Assertiveness Training – Michelle Landy

Confidence comes when we are congruent with what we are doing. Confidence is your invisible secret - choose your goal and what you would like to do to become confident. The road is passable but there will be a few potholes.

**DR15/035 2013 AUSTRALIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION
CONFERENCE**

**E91.3255;
E95.9421**

**S.O. What? – Status of Women Advisory Committee, Gosford City Council – Gaining Equality -
Vicki Scott, Nicole Campbell and Sue Verhoek**

The committee has a great relationship with the community:

- To promote the Status of Women in Gosford Local Government Area
- To encourage a “sense of place” for women in the Gosford LGA
- To foster active participation from women in the Gosford LGA to develop a centralised local networking hub
- To hold events throughout each year including International Women’s Day that provide a forum for women to voice their concerns and discuss local issues.

Building Meaningful Relationships – Starting with Yourself

Rob Noble – Acting General Manager ESC and Veronica Lunn

The Enneagram, a nine pointed diagram, is a powerful approach to understanding the psychology, emotions and behaviour of ourselves and others. The primary goal and purpose of the Enneagram is self knowledge, its ancillary benefit is that it allows us to understand the behaviour of others, and with that understanding, to be more accepting and compassionate. My Enneagram is Type 9 – “Peacemaker”.

When to Say Nothing – Media Training – Jayne-Maree Sedgman

Media Savvy - The importance of having a good relationship with the media. Journalists hate jargon and corporate speak - think simple language.

2015 ALGWA Conference Bids

Wollongong City Council – Winner, and bids from Manly and Liverpool.

My take me home messages – sticking to and persisting in what you believe and put into action what I have learnt. I have since become a member of ALGWA.

A Local Government Women’s Forum was hosted by the Eurobodalla Shire Council prior to the last elections in 2012. This resulted in our Council going from a male-dominated council to having three women on our team - 30%. I would like to see this increased to 50%. I would also like to encourage young people, indigenous people and people with disabilities to run in the 2016 Local Government Elections.

I would like to request our Council to again host a Forum and invite members of the Office of Local Government (OLG) and members of the NSW Australian Local Government Women’s Association (ALGWA) to assist us in this process.

“Thinking of Becoming a Councillor” - OLG

<http://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/Thinking-of-Becoming-a-Councillor-publication.pdf>

Women in Local Government - ALGWA

<http://www.algwa.org.au/>

DR15/035	2013 AUSTRALIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE	E91.3255; E95.9421
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Women in Local Government

The "NSW Councillor and Candidate Report 2012 Local Government Elections" indicates that in NSW, 36 percent of election candidates, and 27 percent of councillors were women.

According to information currently held by the NSW Division of Local Government (DLG), five percent of General Managers and 21 percent of senior staff are women in NSW councils.

Promoting Gender Equality

Local Government NSW (LGNSW) supports the 50:50 Vision - Councils for Gender Equity and encourages membership of the Australian Local Government Women's Association (ALGWA) by NSW councillors and staff.

CONCLUSION

I want to emphasise the value and importance of Councillors and staff attending conferences - we can make a difference. This is one of the ways we gain experience in our job - practical and face to face contact. Networking is valuable with the contacts we make. We have the opportunity to speak in the forum and outside the forum to key presenters and raise issues that affect our Council. I thank Council for the opportunity to attend this conference.

17. DEALING WITH MATTERS IN CLOSED SESSION

In accordance with Section 10A(2) of the Local Government Act 1993, Council can exclude members of the public from the meeting and go into Closed Session to consider confidential matters, if those matters involve:

- (a) personnel matters concerning particular individuals; or
- (b) the personal hardship of any resident or ratepayer; or
- (c) information that would, if disclosed, confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom the council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business; or
- (d) commercial information of a confidential nature that would, if disclosed;
 - (i) prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied it, or
 - (ii) confer a commercial advantage on a competitor of the council, or
 - (iii) reveal a trade secret,
- (e) information that would, if disclosed, prejudice the maintenance of law; or
- (f) matters affecting the security of the council, councillors, council staff or council property; or
- (g) advice concerning litigation, or advice that would otherwise be privileged from production in legal proceedings on the ground of legal professional privilege or information concerning the nature and location of a place; or
- (h) an item of Aboriginal significance on community land.

and Council considers that discussion of the material in open session would be contrary to the public interest.

In accordance with Section 10A(4) of the Local Government Act 1993 the Chairperson will invite members of the public to make verbal representations to the Council on whether the meeting should be closed to consider confidential matters.

EUROBODALLA SHIRE COUNCIL

ETHICAL DECISION MAKING AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

A GUIDING CHECKLIST FOR COUNCILLORS, OFFICERS AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEES

ETHICAL DECISION MAKING

- Is the decision or conduct legal?
- Is it consistent with Government policy, Council's objectives and Code of Conduct?
- What will the outcome be for you, your colleagues, the Council, anyone else?
- Does it raise a conflict of interest?
- Do you stand to gain personally at public expense?
- Can the decision be justified in terms of public interest?
- Would it withstand public scrutiny?

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

A conflict of interest is a clash between private interest and public duty. There are two types of conflict: Pecuniary – regulated by the *Local Government Act* and Department of Local Government; and Non-Pecuniary – regulated by Codes of Conduct and policy, ICAC, Ombudsman, Department of Local Government (advice only).

THE TEST FOR CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- Is it likely I could be influenced by personal interest in carrying out my public duty?
- Would a fair and reasonable person believe I could be so influenced?
- Conflict of interest is closely tied to the layperson's definition of "corruption" – using public office for private gain.
- Important to consider public perceptions of whether you have a conflict of interest.

IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS

- 1st** Do I have private interests affected by a matter I am officially involved in?
- 2nd** Is my official role one of influence or perceived influence over the matter?
- 3rd** Do my private interests conflict with my official role?

Whilst seeking advice is generally useful, the ultimate decision rests with the person concerned.

AGENCY ADVICE

Officers of the following agencies are available during office hours to discuss the obligations placed on Councillors, Officers and Community Committee members by various pieces of legislation, regulation and Codes.

CONTACT	PHONE	EMAIL	WEBSITE
Eurobodalla Shire Council Public Officer	4474-1000	council@eurocoast.nsw.gov.au	www.esc.nsw.gov.au
ICAC	8281 5999	icac@icac.nsw.gov.au	www.icac.nsw.gov.au
Local Government Department	4428 4100	dlg@dlg.nsw.gov.au	www.dlg.nsw.gov.au
NSW Ombudsman	8286 1000 Toll Free 1800 451 524	nswombo@ombo.nsw.gov.au	www.ombo.nsw.gov.au

Reports to Committee are presented generally by 'exception' - that is, only those items that do not comply with legislation or policy, or are the subject of objection, are discussed in a report.

Reports address areas of business risk to assist decision making. Those areas include legal, policy, environment, asset, economic, strategic and financial.

Reports may also include key planning or assessment phrases such as:

Setback Council's planning controls establish preferred standards of setback (eg 7.5m front; 1m side and rear);

Envelope taking into account the slope of a lot, defines the width and height of a building with preferred standard of 8.5m high;

Footprint the percentage of a lot taken up by a building on a site plan.

Acronym	Meaning	Description
ACR	Australian Capital Region	The political and strategic grouping of the ACT government and 17 adjacent councils.
AEP	Annual Exceedance Probability	For floods expressed as a % eg 1% = 1:100 year event. The NSW Flood Guidelines nominate types of development and controls.
AHD	Australian Height Datum	Floor levels for buildings set to remain at or above flood level (expressed as 'freeboard').
APZ	Asset Protection Zone	Area to be cleared and maintained around habitable buildings in bushfire prone areas.
AS	Australian Standard	Standards set by national body as minimum construction, service, system, planning or design requirements.

Acronym	Meaning	Description
BCA	Building Code of Australia	Prescribes minimum standards or performance base for building construction.
CAMP	Companion Animal Management Plan	Required by state law, plan nominating management of dogs and cats and areas for access for the exercise of dogs (eg beaches and reserves).
CC	Construction Certificate	Floor plans approved by council or private certifier in compliance with development conditions and BCA.
COPW	Condition of Public Works Report	Required by state law to define the condition of infrastructure assets, the cost to upgrade to defined standards, the current costs of maintenance and desired levels of maintenance.
CP	Cultural Plan	A cultural plan enables identification of cultural assets, identity and needs as well as providing a framework to develop cultural initiatives to increase opportunities for residents.
CSR	Complaint and Service Request	Requests received from public by phone, letter, email or Councillor to attend to certain works (eg pothole) or complain of certain service or offence (eg dogs barking).
DA	Development Application	Required by state law to assess suitability and impacts of a proposed development.
DAP	Disability Action Plan	Council plan outlining proposed works and services to upgrade facilities to progressively meet Disability Discrimination Act.
DCP	Development Control Plan	Local planning policy defining the characteristics sought in residential, commercial land.
DECCW	Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (formerly EPA, NPWS, DEC)	State agencies (former Environment Protection and National Parks), DNR managing state lands and natural resources and regulating council activity or advising on development applications.
DWE	Department of Water and Energy	State agency managing funding and approvals for town and country water and sewer services and State energy requirements.
DoP	Department of Planning	State agency managing state lands and regulating council activity or advising on development applications or strategic planning.
DLG	Department of Local Government	State agency responsible for regulating local government.
DoL	Department of Lands	State agency managing state lands and advising on development applications or crown land management.
DoC	Department of Commerce	State agency (formerly Public Works) managing state public water, sewer and buildings infrastructure and advising/supervising on council infrastructure construction.

Acronym	Meaning	Description
DoH	Department of Health	State agency responsible for oversight of health care (community and hospital) programs. Also responsible for public warning of reportable health risks.
DOTAR	Department of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development and Local Government	Federal agency incorporating infrastructure, transport system, and assisting regions and local government.
EBP	Eurobodalla Bike Plan	Strategic Plan identifying priorities and localities for cycleways in the Shire.
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement	Required for designated and state developments researching and recommending solutions to social, economic and environmental impacts.
EMP	Estuary Management Plan	Community based plan, following scientific research of hydrology and hydraulics, recommending actions to preserve or enhance social, economic and environmental attributes of estuary
EMS	Environmental Management System	Plans prepared by council (such as waste management and strategic planning) around AS14000.
EOI	Expressions of Interest	Often called in advance of selecting tenders to ascertain capacity and cost of private sector performing tasks or projects on behalf of council.
EP&A	Environment Planning & Assessment Act	State law defining types of development on private and public lands, the assessment criteria and consent authorities.
ESC	Eurobodalla Shire Council	
ESD	Ecologically Sustainable Development	Global initiative recommending balance of social, economic and environmental values in accord with 7 ESD principles.
ESS	Eurobodalla Settlement Strategy	Council strategy prepared with assistance of government to identify best uses and re-uses of urban lands, the appropriate siting of private and public investment (eg institutions, employment areas or high density residential) based on current and planned infrastructure and land capacity.
ET	Equivalent Tenement	Basis of calculation of demand or impact of a single dwelling on water and sewer system.
FAG	Financial Assistance Grant	Federal general purpose grant direct to local government based on population and other 'disability' factors.

Acronym	Meaning	Description
FSR	Floor Space Ratio	A measure of bulk and scale, it is a calculation of the extent a building floor area takes up of an allotment.
GIS	Geographic Information System	Computer generated spatial mapping of land and attributes such as infrastructure, slope, zoning.
IPART	Independent Pricing & Regulatory Tribunal	State body that reviews statutory or government business regulatory frameworks and pricing levels.
IPWEA	Institute Public Works Engineers Australia	Professional association.
IWCMS	Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy (or Plan)	Council plan identifying risk and social, economic and environmental benefit of proposed augmentation to water, sewer and stormwater systems.
IWMS	Integrated Waste Management (Minimisation) Strategy	Council plan identifying risk and social, economic and environmental benefit of proposed augmentation of waste (solids, effluent, contaminated, liquid trade waste).
LEP	Local Environment Plan	The statutory planning instrument defining the zones and objectives of urban and rural areas.
LGAct	Local Government Act	State law defining the role of Mayor, Councillors, staff, financing, approvals etc.
LGMA	Local Government Managers Australia	Professional association.
LGNSW	Local Government NSW	Representative advisory and advocacy group for councils in NSW.
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding	Agreement in principle between parties (eg council and agency) to achieve defined outcomes.
NPWS	National Parks & Wildlife Service	Now merged into DECCW.
NRM	Natural Resource Management	
NVC	Native Vegetation Act 2003	State law defining means of protection of threatened legislation and approval processes to clear land.
OC	Occupation Certificate	Issued by council or private certifier that building is safe to occupy and in compliance with development conditions and BCA.
OSMS	On site sewage management system	Includes septic tanks, aerated systems, biocycles etc.
PCA	Principal Certifying Authority	The person or organisation appointed by applicant to inspect and certify structures.

Acronym	Meaning	Description
PIA	Planning Institute of Australia	Professional association.
POEO	Protection of the Environment Operations Act	State law outlining standards for emissions and discharges and penalties for pollution.
PoM	Plan of Management (usually for community land)	Council plan nominating type of uses for community land and range of facilities progressively to be provided on land.
PPP	Public Private Partnerships	
PTS	Public Transport Strategy	Council strategy to initiate mechanisms to promote and facilitate public transport (bus, taxi, community transport, cycles) in design of subdivisions, developments and council works.
REF	Review of Environmental Factors	Council examination of risk and social, economic and environmental benefit of proposed works, assessed against state planning, environment and safety laws.
REP	Regional Environment Planning Policy	Outlines compulsory state planning objectives to be observed in development assessment and strategic planning.
RFS	Rural Fire Service	State agency responsible for providing equipment and training for volunteer firefighter brigades, and the assessment and approval of developments in bushfire prone lands.
RLF	Regional Leaders Forum	The group of mayors and general managers representing the councils in the ACR.
RMS	Roads & Maritime Service	State agency responsible for funding, construction and maintenance of state roads, the approval of council works on arterial roads and development applications.
S64	S64 Contributions Plan	Developer contributions plan to enable, with council and state funds, the augmentation of water, sewer and stormwater infrastructure.
S94 S94A	S94 Contributions Plan S94A Contributions Plan Levy Plan	Developer contributions to enable construction of public infrastructure and facilities such as roads, reserves, carparks, amenities etc.
SCG	Southern Councils Group	Political and strategic grouping of councils along the NSW south coast from Wollongong to the border, lobbying government for assistance (eg highways) and resourcing sharing initiatives.
SCRS	South Coast Regional Strategy	Regional Strategy prepared by DoP for ESC, BVSC and part SCC to guide new LEPs.

Acronym	Meaning	Description
SEA	Strategic Environment Assessment	Spatial assessment of environmental constraints of land considered in design and assessment of subdivision and infrastructure. Scientific research behind assessment of capacity of land and waterways in rural residential and urban expansion lands to sustain human settlement.
SEPP	State Environmental Planning Policy	Outlines compulsory state planning objectives.
SNSWLHD	Southern NSW Local Health Districts	State board commissioned with oversight of health care in Highlands, Monaro and Far South Coast.
SoER	State of the Environment Report	Required by state law, the comprehensive assessment (every four years) of the condition and the pressures on the social, economic and environmental features of the Shire and appropriate responses to address or preserve those issues.
SP	Social Plan	Required by state law, the comprehensive assessment (every four years) of the condition and the pressures on the social framework of the community, their services and facilities and economic interactions.
.....SP	Structure Plan	Plan promoting landuses and siting of infrastructure and facilities in towns (eg, BBSP – Batemans Bay Structure Plan).
SRCMA	Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority	State agency commissioned with assessment and monitoring of health and qualities of catchments from Wollongong to the border, and determine directions and priorities for public and private investment or assistance with grants.
STP	Sewer Treatment Plant	Primary, secondary and part tertiary treatment of sewage collected from sewers before discharge into EPA approved water ways or irrigation onto land.
TAMS	Total Asset Management System	Computer aided system recording condition and maintenance profiles of infrastructure and building assets.
TBL	Triple Bottom Line	Commercial term coined to encourage business to consider and disclose social and environmental risk, benefit and costs in the conduct of business to guide investors as to the long term sustainability and ethics of a business. Taken up by Council to record the basis of prioritisation, the review of condition, the monitor of progress and the financial disclosure of preventative or maintenance investment in council based social and environmental activities.
ToR	Terms of Reference	
TSC	Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995	State law governing the protection of nominated species and relevant assessment and development controls.

Acronym	Meaning	Description
WCF	Water Cycle Fund	Combination of water, sewer and stormwater activities and their financing arrangements.
WSUD	Water Sensitive Urban Design	Principle behind the IWCMS and council development codes requiring new developments to reduce demand and waste on water resources through contemporary subdivision and building design.