

## EUROBODALLA SHIRE COUNCIL

### PUBLIC FORUM

All members of the community who have registered have been advised that they have a **maximum of seven minutes** to put their case.

Ordinary Meeting of Council on **27 June 2023**

Name	Subject/Comments	Presentation provided?	Mode of presentation?
<b>Public Forum – 10.30am</b>			
Jack Egan	NOM23/001 Review of the Borrowing Management Policy	Yes	In person
Trish Hellier	GMR23/023 Adoption of the Code of Meeting Practice	Yes	Zoom
Max Castle, Vice President, Tuross Head Progress Association	FCS23/013 Adoption of the 2022-26 Delivery Program, 2023-24 Operational Plan including the 2023 Fees and Charges	Yes	In person
Giovanna Hounsell	FCS23/013 Adoption of the 2022-26 Delivery Program, 2023-24 Operational Plan including the 2023 Fees and Charges	Yes	Zoom
Ross Hayward	FCS23/013 Adoption of the 2022-26 Delivery Program, 2023-24 Operational Plan including the 2023 Fees and Charges	Yes	In person
Gavin Gatenby	PSR23/023 Proposed Road Closure – Part Bronte Crescent, Sunshine Bay	No	In person

## NOM23/001 REVIEW OF THE BORROWING MANAGEMENT POLICY

### ON REVIEW OF BORROWING POLICY

I'm a board member of Bushfire Survivors for Climate Action but speak here today as coordinator of 350 Eurobodalla.

350 Eurobodalla's support for this review of borrowing policy is not some green left attempt to undermine market capitalism. It's the exact opposite. It's firmly in the tradition of customers sending a financial signal to the market through their purchasing. This is exactly how markets are meant to work.

In this case the Council is the customer saying we're taking climate action and we don't want to see our expenditure and efforts sabotaged by continued expansion of fossil fuel extraction. So, when we borrow we're going to banks who aren't funding that expansion.

It's just like not doing business with suppliers who have low regard for worker safety or who carelessly pollute. It's like not doing business with PWC.

Thank you

Jack Egan

Good morning Mayor, Councillors, General Manager, Staff, Gallery and those like me that are comfortable zooming from home. My name is Patricia Hellier from Batemans Bay.

**GMR23/023 Revised change Code of Meeting Practice.** Mayor and Councillors I will use words directly from the **Code of Meeting Practice Part 1 in the Code states** – “Decisions are made in a way that is open and transparent” -At a Council Meeting on the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2023 I heard the word “efficiency” used a lot during this segment of the meeting. This revision was not all about bringing Public Forum back into the meetings there were other aspects to this revision “that I believe were major changes ” without any explanations given to the “community” as to why, and yet Mayor and Councillors I will remind you in 2021 you ALL stood on “openness and transparency”. I will remind you Mayor and Councillors the Code of Meeting Practice was work shopped and it came back to Council for adoption in September 2022.

**In relation to the breakdown of the submissions in the summaries on this Agenda I will outline what I believe are 3 of the major changes that were proposed without explanation:-**

I will confirm I am one of the **5 submission** in the summaries who were against moving to monthly meetings and one of my reasons are as follows -

It has been rumoured that one of the reasons for changing the Council Meeting to one a month is due to the fact that we have Directors sitting in Council Meeting for the duration of the meetings which is taking them from their duties. There is a simple solution to this - as each item appears on the Agenda the particular director who is responsible for the item can be sent a text to that directors phone informing them to come to the Gallery therefore this solves the issue of them sitting their for the entire meeting.

I will confirm I am one of the **3 submissions** against removing the delegates report from the business paper. I firmly believe these reports should remain on the Council Agenda and form part of the Minutes so that the Rate Payers of this shire can gain a view of what the “Councillor or Councillors gained from the Conference they attended and why a Councillor may vote in a particular way on an item in the future”.

In my Submission on the COMP changes I also stated I did not agree with Public Access being on an alternate Tuesday to the Council Meeting – this has not been reported in the break down of the submissions received – what I stated in my submission is as follows “One of the many issues with the previous COMP was to bring Public Access back to the same day as the Council Meeting”.

I will confirm I am one of the **4 submission** supported moving Public Forum into the meeting.

I have had a discussion with a rate payer of this shire who indicated to me that they also put a submission in over the revised COMP and this person told me they were against changing the Council Meeting to one a month. This person also told me they were not going to speak on this item today as they had read the Agenda and felt this was a “fore gone conclusion” that the changes would be adopted and we are wasting our time.

Mayor and Councillors if changing the Council Meeting to one a month is about the financial cost due to having Directors sitting in the Gallery and taking them from their work load I will look forward to seeing how you vote on GMR23/029 2023-24 Determination of the Local Government Remunerations – how many Councillors will vote for this proposed financial increase?

Should GMR23/023 be adopted I would suggest that in six month time a report of the outcome of these changes in \$ value be supplied to the rate payers of this shire. PATRICIA HELLIER

## **PRESENTATION BY THPA VICE PRESIDENT – MAX CASTLE**

I am speaking to you today on 2 issues shown as Agenda item 15 – Fire Mitigation on Council Reserve Bushland at Tuross Head and Coopers Island Road

The Tuross Head Progress Association Inc. (THPA) has been requesting Eurobodalla Shire Council for more than five years to reduce bushfire risk at Tuross by thinning overgrown bush along specific roadways in Tuross headland. The main concerns were along Hector McWilliam Drive and Trafalgar Road.

This has culminated in THPA 's last correspondence on the subject to Council being lodged via a Solicitor.

The areas of Tuross Head mentioned have been selected because they consist of large portions of heavily timbered bushland on council reserves on West to Southwest facing slopes. Due to the predominantly eucalyptus bush involved; the steep angle of the mainly rising ground; the frequent impact of this area by very strong winds; this large area is considered to be a likely and major pathway for fire into Tuross residential areas. Apart from roads at the top of the rise, much of this thick bushland is inaccessible to vehicles of any sort.

Importantly, this large bush area is immediately adjacent to the roads at or near the crest of the rise. These roads form the single and ONLY way in and out of Tuross. If a fire quickly reaches these roads, over 2000 permanent residents and up to 3000 ADDITIONAL VISITORS DURING HOLIDAYS, could be trapped on the headland.

THPA believe that the Rural Fire Service determination in the past that these Council reserves are a low fire risk is now almost certainly out of date, based on the standard RFS mathematical calculation on fire loading for fire-fighting purposes.

This type of calculation does not take emergency egress of the public into account. Regardless of high or low risk determination by the RFS, the THPA considers many of our Council owned reserves to currently be a likely and significant pathway for ANY active wind-borne fire into our residential areas. The THPA is very concerned about public safety and the likely tragic cost to humans, property, wildlife and unique flora (e.g. our Norfolk pines) if a wildfire reaches the residential areas.

In the past, Council has considered Tuross relatively safe because of the incorrect assumption that we are “surrounded by water”. Tuross is NOT surrounded by water, it is effectively a wide, and well-wooded peninsular subject to coastal winds, grassfires from adjacent rural leases and wind-borne fire from nearby bushland.

Council appears in the past to also have ignored the possibility that an accidental fire could be initiated within Tuross, that could spread quickly to or from the Council reserves. This could be initiated for example, by a vehicle or residential fire, children playing or lightning strike.

The danger posed by council owned bushland on this headland was clearly illustrated to the entire township of Tuross during the Black Summer Bushfires of 2019/20. The town was inundated by hot wind-borne thick smoke and masses of airborne burnt fire debris with falling parched leaves. By pure luck, there was a last-minute wind change near Turlinjah, which avoided a massive firestorm.

THPA acknowledges that a cost is involved in this recommended mitigation. This is why THPA has requested a “thinning” of vegetation from the roadside, not removal of large trees which is also an environmental consideration. Government grant funding may be available for fire mitigation works.

Since the Black Summer fires, scientists predict worse extremes of weather including fires, due to Climate Change. Residents are very concerned and at a recent general meeting of THPA the members unanimously voted for THPA to continue to lobby Council to carry out the work requested to reduce bushfire risk in Tuross.

Recent rain has increased vegetation growth, especially at low ground levels — and there is now likely a much higher fuel loading in the reserves - and still no council action. THPA has noted our concerns by letter to RFS and in a submission to the current Bushfire Risk Management Plan survey. THPA is now also examining in detail the recommendations and the implementation progress of the NSW Bushfire Enquiry and the National Natural Disasters Royal Commission (Bushfire Royal Commission).

THPA has recently been informed by a resident who is renovating his house opposite the said bushland, that Council has required the installation of very expensive fireproof window shutters indicating that Council is very well aware of the high bushfire risk.

It is requested that you include this in this year's works program.

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## **COOPERS ISLAND**

The following statement is contained on page 79 of the agenda for 27.6.23

### *Coopers Island Road*

*Council will undertake works to clear grass and shrubs from part of the road reserve near the start of the causeway as part of the regular maintenance cycle for Coopers Island Road.*

*Council has provided some carparking which allows for fishers or kayakers to access the waterway. No further works are planned at this stage due to the constraints imposed by the site.*

## **PRESENTATION:**

Coopers project has been a difficult project and presentations have been made to Council in the past. At this stage direct access to water (public waterway) on either side of the bridge has not been provided to replace existing.

The Tuross community are still regularly asking when such access will be provided.

Community support was provided to Council on the basis that action would be taken to address the issue once a new council was in place.

At a previous Council meeting NSW Fisheries staff recommended Council make an approach for Grant Funding to provide small craft launching facilities. These facilities only need to be low impact, however access through the current fencing needs to be reinstated.

The current suggestion is that when the new Infrastructure Manager is appointed that discussion be had with the GM to resolve this long-standing access issue.

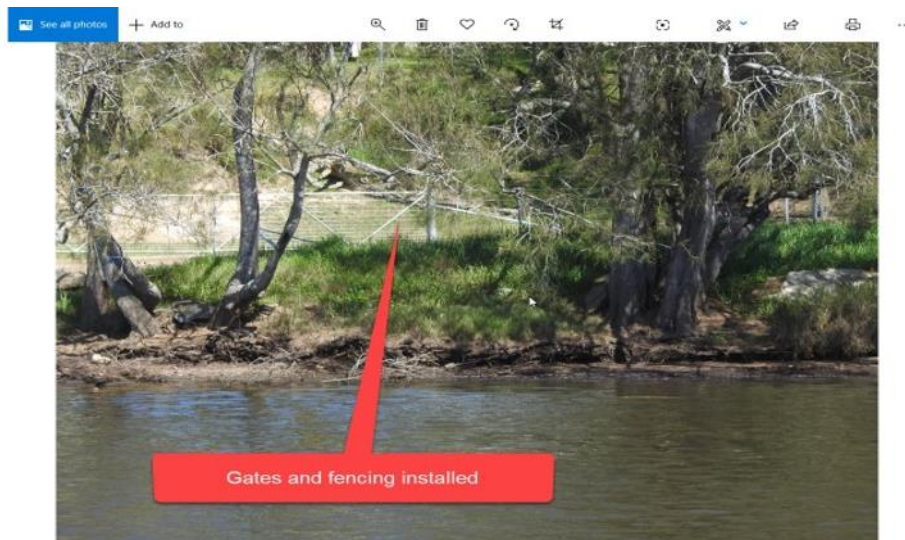
THPA (and the Eurobodalla Fishing/Boating Network) would be pleased if council would support this way forward.

The attached photos indicate areas that are now non accessible by land . Safe kayak access is requested please and provided on identified Crown Land.

Thank you

Max Castle

Vice President THPA





Giovanna Hounsell

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June 26, 2023

Good morning Mayor, Councillors and Staff,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback to Council's draft Delivery Program 2022-2026 and Operational Plan 2023-2024.

I would like to provide feedback to **Strategy 1.3: Respond to our changing climate and natural hazards** :Action: **1.3.1.1 Design and implement programs for plantings, and or,artificial shading of strategic urban streetscapes, council carparks and playgrounds.**

I refer to **The Eurobodalla Local Strategic Planning Statement action 6.2 Investigate the potential for developing a street tree masterplan for urban areas** and the **Eurobodalla Climate Action Plan 2022-32** which calls for plantings of strategic urban streetscapes, council car parks and playgrounds to provide relief from extreme weather events associated with climate change.

With a future shaped by protracted droughts, bushfires, intense rainfall and flooding, in order for tree plantings to be effective, we need a masterplan that addresses the social, aesthetic, cultural, financial and environmental benefits of one of our most effective tools for climate change resilience - our urban trees.

We have 23 Landcare Groups in Eurodalla Shire, who are fortunate enough to benefit from the support, resources and skills of our Council and staff. Volunteers contribute 1000+ hours to environmental projects each year. Our Sustainability Team, Landcare coordinators and members of other community groups such as Coastwatchers, Eurobodalla Natural History Society etc,...have a wealth of knowledge and skills to contribute. They know which trees do well in certain climates and conditions, which give



shade, which are suitable for bird and animal habitat, how to deal with weeds and noxious plants etc..

### **Trees are important in urban areas.**

Urban trees have a critical role in creating healthy cities. They provide shade and shelter, improve air quality, absorb carbon and rainfall, cool local environments, and support wildlife. Trees contribute to attractive urban places, provide seasonal variation, have high cultural value and create memorable landmarks. (Government Architect: Urban tree Canopy)

### **Tree canopy is important.**

In 2017, the CSIRO mapped surface urban heat in Canberra and showed that the locations experiencing the highest urban heat were those where green vegetation cover was at its lowest and impervious surface proportions were high.

When the ACT Govt mapped their urban forest canopy in preparation for their 2021-2045 Urban Forest strategy, they found it only covered around 19% of urban areas, was unevenly dispersed throughout the suburbs, lacked species diversity and was ageing significantly. In order to counteract The Urban Heat Effect the tree canopy needed to be increased, spread more evenly, be more biodiverse, be properly maintained and replaced in some instances.

### **Where trees are needed most in Eurobodalla.**

In order to find out where trees are most needed in Eurobodalla, the tree canopy would need to be measured. The ACT measured it using LiDAR data. (Light Detection and Ranging). App tools are available at: <https://www.itreetools.org>

Urban heat would also need to be mapped to find the areas most adversely affected, because people living in these areas suffer not only higher temperatures but have higher energy costs.

### **The type of trees most suitable for planting.**

Experts suggest that no one species should represent more than 5 to 10% of an urban tree population because a high level of diversity helps build resilience against disease, pests and climate change. (ACT Urban Forest strategy 2021-2045)

### **Trees versus shade sails.**

A consultant arborist with Canopy Tree Experts in Canberra maintains the shade under a tree can be up to 10 degrees cooler than the shade under a shade structure because trees transpire, drawing water up through their roots and vaporising it into the atmosphere. This has a cooling effect on the air. A shade structure simply heats up and radiates heat into the atmosphere.

In some cases shade sails or structures may be a temporary solution until young trees reach maturity, or a permanent solution if trees are inappropriate.

### **Selecting trees with high biodiversity value.**

Correctly chosen trees in urban areas can support and enhance an increased biodiversity of plants, animals and microorganisms, by providing foraging, shelter, shade, roosting, nesting and movement opportunities.

### **Trees age and need replacement.**

As a tree ages and dies it will leave a hole in the canopy. If it is a mature, hollow bearing tree the trunk and hollow should not be removed but left for habitat. As trees are nearing the end of their life, saplings will need to be planted around them to replace them when they die. Management and replacement of trees must be catered for by a masterplan.

### **Will certain trees be offered a higher level of protection?**

In the ACT, Registered trees have the highest level of protection and cannot be removed or damaged. They are protected because of their exceptional natural or cultural heritage, landscape and aesthetic or scientific value. Eurobodalla Shire Council has a Significant Tree register but it needs to be reactivated.

I have nominated trees for this register but have not received notification of my nominations nor found any reference to them on the map of Significant Trees on council's website. Will trees such as The Canoe Tree be afforded protection while this register is not fully operational?

## **The economic and social value of trees**

Trees have economic and social benefits. A study of the existing urban tree canopy in 10 global cities found it improved air quality, avoided stormwater processing by wastewater facilities, provided heating and cooling savings as well as carbon dioxide sequestration. Planting additional urban trees would significantly increase these benefits.

The presence of healthy urban street trees is associated with increased property values.

Urban trees can reduce risk of damage to residences and urban infrastructure from flooding, wind damage, and extreme heat. Shading provided by street trees reduces the need for air conditioners in summer, reducing overall electricity costs. Urban neighbourhoods with healthy trees are typically more friendly and social. (Social, Economic and Environmental Value of Street Trees in the Urban Environment)

A Melbourne case study (included in ACT Urban Forest Strategy) recognised that certain trees have a greater value than their cost of removal and replacement. The calculation specifically considers both the amenity the tree provides, as well as the ecological value the tree has in its landscape.

## **Community contribution and engagement**

Cumberland community helped to increase green canopy cover by planting trees on private property, identify planting locations, watering newly planted trees and participating in community planting days. When developing their Urban Tree Strategy, Council delivered a range of engagement activities, including a focus group, online survey, social media awareness and community outreach days.

As already mentioned, our Landcare and other community groups have a wealth of knowledge skills and experience. They are a proven asset, with a track record of productive partnership with Council.

Our urban street trees are some of our greatest natural resources in helping mitigate the detrimental effects of Climate Change.

They are also some of our most valuable financial, environmental, aesthetic and cultural community assets. A Street Tree Masterplan must be a priority for 2023-2024.

Yours sincerely,

Giovanna Hounsell

## Submission to Council meeting 27 June 2023 – Public Forum

### Proposed free tip vouchers for remote properties.

Summarising submissions can be difficult to fully express the intent. Council's response to my submission (No. 7) does not explain the inequity the proposed new service attempts to solve.

The only information available is the slightly ambiguous one line proposal to "Develop a program..." on page 28 of Councils Plan. Hopefully this can be clarified today.

Equity for all ratepayers is a strong tenant of council operations but there are some standing examples of some ratepayers being more equal than others.

It wasn't egalitarian reasons for these examples but crass political objectives.

Former premier 'Nifty' Neville Wran ignored this tenant to his own benefit when he promised, prior to an election, a healthy rate rebate for pensioners.

After winning, Nifty instructed councils to charge 45% of the rebate to the non-pensioner ratepayers.

Rate pegging was introduced to put a curb on monument building by ego driven councils.

This worked for a while until legitimate council costs increased beyond the mandated rate pegging amount.

Objection to this State introduced problem from country councils gathered strength.

Country water and sewerage schemes were established to be self-funding 'ring fenced' affordable services.

Perhaps it was a wiz-kid adviser in a Minister's office who thought other people's money could be used a-la Nifty to pay for the States problem and dampen the gathering storm.

Selling the idea was easy, council's water and sewerage should be operated as a private company, charge more than required for water, run surpluses, declare profits and tip the proceeds into the council's general fund each year.

Our wiz-kid completely ignored the injustice of running a monopoly where it is compulsory for all customers to contribute a mandated payment and to bank on a dividend being tipped into the general fund.

Also ignored, which created the inequity, the make up of country councils such as ours, that only two thirds of ratepayers pay water & sewerage rates and the other third are not required to make a quid pro quo contribution to the general fund.

Hopefully before any further inequities, the proposal for free tip vouchers in the draft budget will be subject to a full report with public comment prior to submission to council.

I believe this voucher proposal is a genuine attempt to improve service to remote properties but all the pros and cons haven't been considered.

As yet there are no costs shown for this proposed new service. Nor is the inequity considered for those 'non remote properties' who wont receive free vouchers but are paying all three components of the garbage cost i.e. Garbage Availability, Garbage Collection Service and Waste Management Charge.

The Waste Management Charge is the only cost paid by remote properties.

There is an inference in the Council response that these remote properties are somehow paying for a service they are not getting, which isn't the case.

In this year zero, to start council's climb back from unacceptable debt all new proposals need to be thoroughly examined - what offsets or reduction in other services required.

I would appreciate any questions.

Ross Hayward  
Broulee