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**MINUTES OF THE RURAL ROADS ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MEETING HELD AT TILPA COMMUNITY HALL ON  
10 AUGUST 2016 COMMENCING AT 11:30AM**

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**PRESENT**

Peter Vlatko (Cobar Shire Council), Stephen Taylor (Cobar Shire Council), George Milliar (Tilpa), Andrew Farnsworth (Innesowen), Herb Stanley (Tilpa), Geoff Somerville (Tundulya), John & Sandra Gally (Mulya), Julie McClure (Kallara) and Stephanie Sloane (Cobar Shire Council).

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**APOLOGIES**

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the apologies received from Mayor Lilliane Brady OAM (Cobar Shire Council), Deputy Mayor Peter Abbott (Cobar Shire Council), Cath Marepp, Angus Waugh, Greg Martin, Bob Sinclair, Andrew Paul, Justin McClure, Richard Sandford and Stuart Leliebre be accepted.

*John Gally/Julie McClure*

**CARRIED**

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**ITEM 1 - CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

**FILE: R5-36**

**Author: *Director of Engineering Services, Stephen Taylor***

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Committee adopt the Minutes of the Rural Roads Advisory Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 4 May 2016 as a true and accurate reflection of the proceedings of that Meeting.

*Stephen Taylor/Andrew Farnsworth*

**CARRIED**

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**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

- Andrew Farnsworth (Andrew) advised that the following matters were discussed at the meeting of 4 May 2016 but not included in the minutes:
    - Grids;
    - Shire Road 32.
  - Andrew requested more in-depth minutes be taken at meetings. All landowners agreed.
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**ITEM 2 – RURAL ROADS ADVISORY COMMITTEE – STATUS REPORT**

**FILE: R5-36**

**AUTHOR: *Director of Engineering Services, Stephen Taylor***

**Item 51: Seal on RR7518 (5km out of Tilpa) lifting.**

- Julie McClure (Julie) asked what the work programmed for 2016/2017 with regard to the lifting of seal on RR7518 will entail.
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- Stephen Taylor (Stephen) advised that the road will be resealed with \$200k having been allocated in the 2016/2017 budget for that work.
- Julie raised the following matters:
  - Advised she understood length of road to be resealed is the 5km heading out of Tilpa on RR7518 where the seal is lifting;
  - Thinks that 5km needs restructuring/sealing, not just resealing;
  - Shouldn't \$200k pay for more than just a 5km reseat and is it worth spending \$200k on just resealing that section? Wouldn't it make more sense to just patch that 5km and spend remaining money elsewhere?
  - Landowners had discussed other areas they would prefer to prioritise when it came to that \$200k. E.g. 4km section of road from Nangara mailbox.
- Stephen advised length of road scheduled for resealing to be determined and explained costings as follows:
  - Reconstruction/Sealing costs \$200k per km.
  - Resealing (incl. patching & reshaping) costs \$40k per km
  - Therefore, for example, for \$200k, Cobar Shire Council (Council) can either reconstruct/seal 1km of road or reseat/patch/reshape 5km of road.
- Julie advised that, now that breakdown of costs had been explained, she understood the reasoning behind a reseat as opposed to a reconstruction.
- Peter Vlatko (Peter) asked if all landowners were in agreement with regard to the reseat of the section of RR7518 where seal is lifting being prioritised over works they had discussed amongst themselves. All landowners confirmed agreement.
- Andrew Farnsworth queried the life of the reseat. Stephen advised 15years, maybe a bit less due to flood waters in that area.
- Geoff Somerville asked if resealed section would support a fully loaded double road train. Stephen advised it would support up to the legal load limits.
- Stephen advised reseat will be done Feb/Mar/April 2017.

#### **Item 56: Emergency Airstrip**

- Stephen advised all of decision by Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) Road Reference Group (RRG) not to fund further emergency airstrips. If CSC still want one, Greg McMahon, the Regional Emergency Management Officer, recommends location to be west of Cobar or along Cobb Highway.
- Andrew recommended an emergency airstrip on Main Road 7518 as close to the Barrier Highway as possible.

#### **Item 73: Bridges and additional danger areas on MR68 and SR3**

- **SR3 Bridge:** Stephen advised repairs not completed yet due to wet weather. No date for completion can be given at present as waiting for weather to settle down but will be confirmed as soon as known.
- **MR68 Bridges:** No funding allocated for these bridges but dates will be given when available

#### **Item 75: Tilpa Weir campgrounds**

- Angela Shepherd (Angela), Council's Special Projects Officer, was to contact Julie about this matter. Julie advised had not heard from her.
- Peter asked Julie to draw up a plan outlining community ideas for upgrade. He will then liaise with Angela regarding same and come back to the community with an action plan on how these can be achieved, if possible. Peter advised Angela

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can assist the community in this matter if needed e.g. help them write letters to apply for funding.

### **Item 78: Grids**

- An ongoing issue that centres on maintenance of grids and who is responsible for same. Especial confusion when there is a grid that is a landowner's responsibility but it is on a Council Road.
- Discussions of various ways to solve the matter included Peter's suggestion that Council organise grids to be cleared and then split the cost thereof with respective landowners. George Milliar (George) advised he did this previously and was charged \$4,000.00 as the contractor Council employed to do the clearing charged a total of \$8,000.00. George advised landowners could clear the grids themselves much more cheaply.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

*That the General Manager discuss with landowners and Engineering Department the Cobar Shire Council Grid Policy and the problems with issue of maintenance with landowners to provide a priority list of grids to be cleared.*

**Peter Vlatko/George Milliar**

**CARRIED**

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### **ITEM 3 - EXPENDITURE REPORT**

**FILE: R5-36**

**Author: Director of Engineering Services, Stephen Taylor**

- **Capital Expenditure:**
  - Stephen advised Council allocated \$5.7 million of which \$4.7 million has been spent. We lost \$500k worth of work in June that has had to be brought forward into 2016/2017 financial year.
  - **MR7518 – Barnato – Tilpa Road Project - Acres Billabong Stage 1:**
    - \$419,900 to be spent on this project. Stephen brought a copy of the design for floodways which was handed around for landowners to view. He advised culverts have been ordered and will be delivered when area dries out. Waiting on Aboriginal Assessment of site to be done before these can be installed.
    - Julie asked about water capacity (she would like exact figures) and if a hydrology report is available to the public. Stephen advised he did not have the exact figures. Peter said he would ask appropriate people about figures and whether a hydrology modelling report can be made available to the public so they can see how the design was reached. He will advise committee accordingly.
    - It was decided that the landowners would email any questions regarding the remainder of the Expenditure Report to Council.

**RECOMMENDATION:** *That the information contained in the expenditure reports be received and noted, that with regard to Acres Billabong Stage 1, Peter Vlatko will follow up the question of exact water capacity and availability of hydrology modelling report and advise Committee accordingly and that with regard to all other matters contained in the Expenditure Report, landowners would email any questions to Council.*

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

**1. Progress of funding for tarsealing of the Cobar-Louth Road – John Gally:**

- Stephen advised Council has to keep applying for funding for this project from RMS until it's approved and that it probably won't get approved this year but hopefully will next financial year. Funding from RMS REPAIR program is \$400k and Council will provide a further \$400k which will seal 5km on this road. There is a further 75km on this road to be sealed, 45km for which Cobar Shire Council is responsible with the remaining 30km the responsibility of Bourke Shire Council. Geoff asked if sealed roads have to be a certain width. If not, could they be narrower which would allow the budget to extend to sealing further kilometres. Stephen advised it was a safety issue. Peter said he would look into this with regard to the legalities and Council's insurance to see if narrower and therefore longer sealing is an option and advise Committee. John asked if there was anything the Mulya people could do to help secure the funding from the RMS (lobby MP's etc). He is concerned that the tarsealing will not happen and that the communities in the area will continue to die.

**2. Road Closures – Herb Stanley**

**Issues raised by landowners:**

- Roads being closed without road owners being consulted, therefore possibly being closed without needing to be;
- Closed signs staying up longer than they need to – businesses suffer;
- Road owners feeling they are doing Council's job for them when they are asked by Council to drive (sometimes substantial distances) to check condition of a road with regard to need for closure;
- Road closure signs appearing at one end of the road but not the other;
- Julie feels Council is not using common sense when it comes to road closures and is too risk averse;
- Not enough information on Road Conditions Report;
- Sandra Gally (Sandra) asked if the remote weather stations could not be put to better use when it comes to determining which roads need to be closed.

**Questions raised:**

- Is there certain criterion that determines the amount of rain that will close a road? Stephen advised there is not, it's assessed at each rain event.
- How many parts of a road have to be bad before it is closed?
- How soon after rain can a road be opened? Julie felt road closure signs were often left up longer than was necessary due to laziness/ineptitude on behalf of Council. Peter advised roads being closed longer than they appear to need to be could be due to insurance issues.

**Suggestions offered for resolution:**

- Julie suggested Council review its Road Closure Policy and put criteria in place for important roads in relation to how much rain warrants their

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closure. E.g.: 52 Mile Road to be closed following 15ml of rain. She also suggested the Road Conditions Report be amended to include more detailed information.

- Peter asked if landowners would be willing to provide knowledge with regard to various areas on roads in their vicinity where different closures restrictions may apply. Julie felt it was Council's responsibility to do this and then show same to landowners for comment and input.
- Peter agreed there needs to be a restructure with regard to the Council's policies for road closures and he will liaise with the Engineering Department regarding same. He will ensure that a draft of the restructure is shared with landowners before final decisions are made so that everyone concerned is able to have an input into the matter.
- Peter advised he would also make sure that the person responsible for the taking down of road closure signs fully understands the repercussions for landowners if these signs are left up unnecessarily.

### **3. Grading – Geoff Somerville**

- Geoff believes that, in the interest of promoting tourism, roads should be graded more than once a year. He also feels that Council does not take advantage of the times when there is moisture on the roads to do grading.
- Julie agreed with the idea of maintenance grading, saying bad roads can end up costing truck drivers who pick up stock from properties. She advised that Central Darling Council engage local landowners who have graders to assist them with maintenance grading and pay them to do so. Advised she is able to do this as she has the correct insurance.
- Peter advised he is prepared to look into that option and the requirements needed to put it in place.
- John said the white gravel being used on Mulya Road is great. Peter advised he has asked Stephen to get the Supervisors to find suitable gravel to be crushed and stockpiled ready to go when required.

### **4. Sealing on Wilga Downs Road, and Windara Bend – George Milliar**

- **Wilga Downs Road:** George said he didn't think there was any other sealing going on besides that taking place on Mulya Rd, The Wooltrack and the Fifty Two Mile Rd. Stephen advised that the CSC policy is that the abovementioned three (3) roads are the priority roads with regard to sealing but if Council can get grant money for more sealing, it will do further roads. Funding can be provided for non-priority roads if they meet certain criteria. If we have such roads, we will apply for the funding and, if granted, seal that road. George asked if a report from landowners stating that it was costing road users, especially primary freight users, to not be able to use bad roads would help in that application for funding?
- **Windara Bend:** George said that this road is still not in an acceptable condition despite the work done on it and asked when the work will be completed.

### **5. Other:**

- Peter advised he has asked Stephen for a 12 month program of works so that he can be fully aware of all that will be happening.
- Peter advised he wants to implement a policy where Council liaise with

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landowners about projects that Council are proposing to do and get their input before the project happens.

- Julie suggested that Peter send a letter to all landowners introducing himself and inviting them to nominate their top five (5) priorities/ideas with regard to roads. Peter thought it was better for him to come to meetings and ask for their priorities and then respond to same with a letter but that he was happy to do the letter as per Julie's suggestion and go from there. Stephen advised we had a community list of addresses.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

*That Peter Vlatko does the following:*

1. *Follow-up legalities and insurance with regard to narrower sealed roads and advise Committee thereto;*
2. *Liaise with the Engineering Department with regard to the restructure of Council's road closure policy, with a draft of the restructured policy to be shared with all landowners to gain their input before final decisions are made;*
3. *Ensure the repercussions of road closure signs are understood by Council personnel involved in signage.*
4. *Look into the requirements required for the option of landowner assisted grading.*
5. *Implement a Council policy whereby landowners are notified and asked for input on projects prior to commencement.*
6. *Write a letter to all landowners introducing himself and inviting them to nominate their road priorities.*

*Julie McClure/Geoff Somerville*

**CARRIED**

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#### **FUTURE MEETING**

The next Rural Roads Advisory Committee Meeting is scheduled to be held on Thursday 24 November 2016 at Cobar Shire Council Chambers commencing at 2.00pm.

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS THE MEETING CLOSED AT 1.44PM**