



Ordinary Council

LATE REPORTS

Business Paper

date of meeting: Wednesday 19 July 2017

location: Council Chambers
17 Burrawan Street
Port Macquarie

time: 5.30pm

Community Vision

A sustainable high quality of life for all

Community Mission

Building the future together
People Place Health Education Technology

Council's Corporate Values

- ★ Sustainability
- ★ Excellence in Service Delivery
- ★ Consultation and Communication
- ★ Openness and Accountability
- ★ Community Advocacy

Community Themes

- ★ Leadership and Governance
- ★ Your Community Life
- ★ Your Business and Industry
- ★ Your Natural and Built Environment

How Members of the Public Can Have Their Say at Council Meetings

Council has a commitment to providing members of the public with an input into Council's decision making. The Council's Code of Meeting Practice provides two (2) avenues for members of the public to address Council on issues of interest or concern at the Ordinary Council Meeting. These are:

- Addressing Council on an Agenda Item (if the matter **is** listed in the Council Business Paper)
- Addressing Council in the Public Forum (if the matter **is not** listed in the Council Business Paper)

You can request to address Council by completing the:

- 'Request to Speak on an Agenda Item' form
- 'Request to Speak in the Public Forum' form

These can be obtained from Council's Offices at Laurieton, Port Macquarie and Wauchope or by downloading it from Council's website.

Requests can also be lodged on-line at:

<http://www.pmhc.nsw.gov.au/About-Us/How-Council-Works/Council-Committee-Meetings/Request-to-speak-on-an-Agenda-Item>

<http://www.pmhc.nsw.gov.au/About-Us/How-Council-Works/Council-and-Committee-Meetings/Request-to-speak-in-a-Public-Forum>

Your request to address Council must be received by Council no later than 4:30pm on the day prior to the Council Meeting.

- Council will permit no more than two (2) speakers 'in support of' and two (2) speakers 'in opposition to' the recommendation on any one (1) Agenda Item.
- A maximum of five (5) speakers will be heard in the Public Forum.
- There is no automatic right under legislation for the public to participate in a Meeting of Council or a Committee of Council.
- For a member of the public to be considered to address Council they must agree to strictly adhere to all relevant adopted Council Codes, Policies and Procedures at all times.
- Consideration of items for which requests to address the Council Meeting have been received will commence at 5:30pm.
- When your name is called, please proceed to the Council Table and address Council.
- Each speaker will be allocated a maximum of five (5) minutes to address Council. This time is strictly enforced.
- Councillors may ask questions of a speaker following an address. Each answer, by the speaker to a question, is limited to two (2) minutes. A speaker cannot ask questions of Council.
- An Agenda Item will be debated by Council following the address.
- Council will not determine any matter raised in the Public Forum session, however Council may resolve to call for a future report.
- If you have any documentation to support your presentation, provide two (2) copies to Council by 12 noon on the day of the Meeting.
- If a speaker has an audio visual presentation, a copy of the presentation is to be provided to Council by 12 noon on the day of the Meeting.
- The following will **not** be considered in the Public Forum (in accordance with the Code of Meeting Practice, clause 2.14.14):
 - Proposed or current development and rezoning applications and related matters.
 - A third (3rd) or subsequent application by a single member of the public to address Council on the same issue in the same calendar year. Council, at its discretion, may elect to exempt representatives or members of community groups from this restriction.
 - Any formal procurement process, contract negotiation or dispute resolution being undertaken.
 - Any matter the General Manager (or their delegate) considers inappropriate for discussion in the Public Forum.
- Council accepts no responsibility for any defamatory statements made by speakers.
- Members of the public may quietly enter and leave the Meeting at any time.

Ordinary Council Meeting

Wednesday, 19 July 2017

LATE REPORTS

Items of Business

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4 Your Natural and Built Environment

What we are trying to achieve

A connected, sustainable, accessible community and environment that is protected now and into the future.

What the result will be

We will have:

- Effective management and maintenance of essential water, waste and sewer infrastructure
- A community that is prepared for natural events and climate change
- Sustainable and environmentally sensitive development outcomes that consider the impact on the natural environment
- Accessible transport network for our communities
- Infrastructure provision and maintenance that meets community expectations and needs
- Well planned communities that are linked to encourage and manage growth
- Accessible and protected waterways, foreshores, beaches and bushlands
- An environment that is protected and conserved for future generations
- Renewable energy options that are understood and accessible by the community

How we will get there

- 4.1 Provide (appropriate) infrastructure and services including water cycle management, waste management, and sewer management
- 4.2 Aim to minimise the impact of natural events and climate change, for example, floods, bushfires and coastal erosion
- 4.3 Facilitate development that is compatible with the natural and built environment
- 4.4 Plan for integrated transport systems that help people get around and link our communities
- 4.5 Plan for integrated and connected communities across the Port Macquarie-Hastings area
- 4.6 Restore and protect natural areas
- 4.7 Provide leadership in the development of renewable energy opportunities
- 4.8 Increase awareness of issues affecting our environment, including the preservation of flora and fauna



Item: 12.08

Subject: QUESTION FROM PREVIOUS MEETING - MANAGEMENT OF
ROADSIDE VEGETATION

Presented by: Infrastructure, Andrew Doig

RECOMMENDATION

That Council note the information contained in this report regarding rural roadside vegetation management.

Question from Councillor Griffiths:

Can the General Manager please detail the current processes in place for the management of roadside vegetation and the various resourcing and legislative constraints that exist around this and any other relevant information.

Comments by Councillor (if provided):

Nil.

Response

Rural roadside vegetation is managed through the Transport and Stormwater Network Section of Council.

Vegetation management resources are allocated on a risk based approach, in relation to the extent the vegetation creates a traffic hazard. Factors that influence the rating of a traffic hazard include traffic volumes, road hierarchy, location of hazard (within travel lanes, shoulder or other area) and the type of hazard (trees felled across the road, grass or brush against the road edge etc).

Council manages rural vegetation through two processes. One being a scheduled program of work for the specific maintenance activity e.g. roadside slashing. The other being to manage specific vegetation issues that are raised by the public through Council's Customer Request Management (CRM) system. The issues raised are then risk assessed as noted above. If the issue raised is determined a risk requiring attention then it is prioritised in consideration with all other current vegetation management requests, the current schedule of programmed works and the available resources.

Often many rural vegetation issues are managed through the scheduled program, however if the risk rating is at a level that requires more immediate action then the crew will be temporarily diverted away from scheduled program and the work completed outside of the program. This process of redirecting crews to higher priority works has an immediate impact of delaying the scheduled program of work.

Where requests relate specifically to the risk posed by trees, usually dead or unhealthy trees, Council's Arborist will make an assessment of the health of the tree and the likely hood of it dropping limbs or falling over thus providing a risk rating for any potential works. All tree removal works or major limb lopping is undertaken by external contractors.

Other works undertaken in the rural roadside vegetation management include:

- Roadside Slashing (mowing of grass with a tractor slasher) on sealed roads only.
- Outreach Mowing (hard vegetation removal up to 100mm dia.) unsealed and sealed roads.
- Weed Spraying on unsealed roads, ahead of the grading crew.

Previously Council had an allocation of approximately \$500,000 for rural roadside vegetation management which meant that most works were highly reactive and based heavily on CRM responses, with limited programmed works. However in the 2016/17 financial year the budget was increased to approximately \$1M for rural roadside vegetation management. The additional funding provided has resulted in approximately 80% of the rural road network receiving a higher level of service. This increase in funding allowed for more programmed works to be undertaken and the current works programmes that have been implemented are shown below.

Program	Coverage	Schedule	Available Resources
Roadside Slashing	Approx. 342km (75%) of sealed rural roads	12 months	1 Council Slasher
Outreach Mowing	428km of sealed roads and 460km of unsealed roads	5 years	1 Council Mower 1 Contract Mower
Weed Spraying	All unsealed roads and rural sealed roads.	Approx. 1 month ahead of the grading and slashing schedule	1 Council Crew (Natural Resources Section)
Tree Management	All rural roads	Unscheduled - CRM Driven	Contractors

The programs above represent the extent of work permissible within the constraints of the current level of resourcing.

As a Road Authority, Council is required to manage and maintain its roads. This includes the maintenance of vegetation which can cause damage to road infrastructure and or create traffic hazards.

In performing vegetation management Council must give consideration to the environmental impacts of the works being undertaken, which in turned are governed by a large number of Acts of Legislation, which include:

- Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (1979)
 - o SEPP Infrastructure (2007)

- SEPP 14 - Coastal Wetlands (2011)
- SEPP 26 - Littoral Rainforests (2011)
- Roads Act (1993)
- Threatened Species Act (1995)
- Fisheries Act (1994)
- National Parks and Wildlife Act (1974)
- State Emergency Service Act (1989)
- Civil Liability Act (2002)
- Local Government Act (1993)

The Roads Act requires Council to management and maintain the road network, which includes managing vegetation that may cause a risk to motorists. The approval mechanism, including managing the environmental impacts of roadside vegetation works is derived from the Environmental Planning and Assessment (EP&A) Act and more specifically State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) Infrastructure. The Roads Act provides complementary coverage to vegetation management activities with Council, acting as the Road Authority may, despite any other Act or law to the contrary, remove or lop any tree or other vegetation that is on or overhanging a public road if, in its opinion, it is necessary to do so for the purpose of carrying out road work or removing a traffic hazard.

However, the Acts detailed above constrain the management of rural roadside vegetation particularly with respect to impacts on:

- rural roadside endangered ecological communities,
- rural roadside threatened plants,
- rural roadside hollow bearing trees,
- SEPP 14 wetlands and vegetation emanating from Nature Reserves and National Parks
- Marine vegetation (mangroves) and potential pollution of watercourses.

Council must also consider environmental requirements and as such these constraints cannot be removed but must be appropriately managed, which requires appropriate resources and at times may prevent or reduce the level of works that can actually be achieved.

For the reasons outlined, there is a considerable level of constraint in what can be achieved in rural roadside vegetation management given the current level of resource and environmental legislation.

Attachments

Nil