



Ordinary Council

LATE REPORTS

Business Paper

date of meeting: Thursday 15 February 2024

location: Council Chambers, 17 Burrawan Street, Port Macquarie

time: 10:00am

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Sustainability ★ Excellence in Service Delivery ★ Consultation and Communication ★ Openness and Accountability ★ Community Advocacy
Community Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Leadership and Governance ★ Your Community Life ★ Your Business and Industry ★ Your Natural and Built Environment

Under Clause 3.23 Statement of ethical Obligations in the Code of Meeting Practice as adopted by Council at the Extraordinary Meeting of Council held on 23 June 2022 (Item 6.04), business papers for all ordinary and extraordinary meetings of the council and committees of the council must contain a statement reminding councillors of their oath or affirmation of office made under section 233A of the Act and their obligations under the council's code of conduct to disclose and appropriately manage conflicts of interest.

Councillors are reminded of the oath or affirmation which was taken by each of them on 10 January 2022.

Oath Of Councillor

I swear that I will undertake the duties of the office of Councillor in the best interests of the people of Port Macquarie-Hastings local government area and the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council and that I will faithfully and impartially carry out the functions, powers, authorities and discretions vested in me under the Local Government Act 1993 or any other Act to the best of my ability and judgment.

Affirmation Of Councillor

I solemnly and sincerely declare and affirm that I will undertake the duties of the office of Councillor in the best interests of the people of Port Macquarie-Hastings local government area and the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council and that I will faithfully and impartially carry out the functions, powers, authorities and discretions vested in me under the Local Government Act 1993 or any other Act to the best of my ability and judgment.

Councillors have the opportunity to declare any interests in items on the agenda and inform the Council and public if they will be leaving the Chambers during the debate and voting on the item.

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Items of Business

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Item: 07.03

Subject: MAYORAL MINUTE - INDEPENDENT STRATEGIC REVIEW ON THE INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PROGRAM - OXLEY HIGHWAY UPGRADE PROJECT AT WRIGHTS ROAD AND LAKE ROAD

Mayor, Peta Pinson

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Note that the Chief Executive Officer has written to The Hon. Catherine King MP, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, on 22 November 2023 raising concern regarding the loss of Australian Government funding for the proposed Oxley Highway Upgrade at Wrights Road and Lake Road.**
- 2. Note that further correspondence from the Chief Executive Officer was provided to The Hon. Catherine King MP requesting a meeting with respect to the matter.**
- 3. Acknowledge receipt of a response from The Hon. Catherine King MP dated 29 January 2024, advising that the project needed to be identified in the context of regional strategic priorities of the NSW Government for consideration in future budgets of the Australian Government.**
- 4. Request the Chief Executive Officer write to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, The Hon. Jenny Aitchison MP; the Shadow Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, The Hon. Dave Layzell MP; and the Member for Port Macquarie, The Hon. Leslie Williams MP, requesting support for the identification of the Oxley Highway Upgrade Project at Wrights Road and Lake Road as a significant regional strategic priority to ensure the Australian Government is in a position to consider the project for funding as part of future budget preparation.**

Discussion

In June 2023, the Australian Government commissioned an Independent Strategic Review on the Infrastructure Investment Program (IIP) projects across Australia. An outcome of the review announced in November 2023 was that funding for the upgrade of the Oxley Highway at Wrights Road and Lake Road (called Stage 2 in the review) had been revoked. This announcement is of great concern as upgrading of the Oxley Highway to reduce congestion and improve safety at this location is of high priority for our Local Government Area.

At the December 2023 Ordinary Meeting of Council in response to a Mayoral Minute regarding the Independent Strategic Review of the Infrastructure Investment Program, Council resolved the following:

“That Council:

- 1. Note that funding from the Australian Government for the upgrade of Lorne Road will remain in place following the review of the Infrastructure Investment Program.*
- 2. Note that funding from the Australian Government to plan the upgrade of the Oxley Highway at Wrights Road and Lake Road has been revoked after the review of the Infrastructure Investment Program.*
- 3. Note that the Chief Executive Officer has written to the relevant Federal and State Ministers, Shadow Ministers and our Local Members raising our strong concern with the loss of funding for the proposed Oxley Highway upgrade at Wrights Road and Lake Road.*
- 4. Support Local Government NSW in their representations to the Australian Government regarding the 17 infrastructure projects in NSW that have lost funding following the review of the Infrastructure Investment Program.*
- 5. Advocate to the relevant NSW State Government Minister The Hon. Jenny Aitchison, Minister for Regional Transport and Roads.”*

In December 2023, Council had the opportunity to meet with The Hon. Jenny Aitchison, Minister for Regional Transport and Roads for the NSW Government. The Minister suggested that Council seek to meet with the relevant Australian Government Ministers related to the project and the IIP review. The Chief Executive Officer wrote to the relevant Ministers arising from this meeting.


A response to the Chief Executive Officers correspondence of 22 November 2023 was received from The Hon. Catherine King MP, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government for the Australian Government, on 9 February 2024 (dated 29 January 2024). This letter is attached and is provided for noting. In the response, the Minister advised the following with respect to the Oxley Highway project:

“I acknowledge the information you have provided in your letter about the Council’s priority of upgrading the Oxley Highway at Wrights Road and Lake Road. Should the NSW Government wish to raise this project again in the future, once the project is identified in the context of regional strategic priorities, the request will be considered in the context of future budgets.”

Separately, the Minister’s office also advised that the Minister is unable to accommodate the request for a meeting, recommending reaching out to the Minister’s Infrastructure Advisor for this purpose.

Arising from the Minister’s letter, this Mayoral Minute proposes to write to the Minister and the Shadow Minister for Regional Transport and Roads for the NSW Government, and the Local Member for Port Macquarie, with respect to ensuring the project is identified as a regional strategic priority by the NSW Government. This is for the purpose of ensuring the project has the greatest potential of securing funding from the Australian Government in future budget allocations.

Attachments

-  Correspondence from The Hon Catherine King MP