

PRESENT: Cr Jason Newton (Chair), Cr Dale Hogden, Cr Denis Todd, Mr Elliott Shannon, Mr Greg Piper, Mr Mark Prugger (6.56pm), Mr Stewart Rodgers and Mr Mal Unicomb* (Local State Member).

** Attendance via Zoom video conference.*

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms Nicole Benson (Director Technical Services) and Mr Ali Talebi (Acting Manager Road Operations).

Director Technical Services introduced Ali Talebi as the interim Roads Manager.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: Mr Elliott Shannon and Mr Greg Piper declared a conflict of interest due to owning grids (less than significant).

APOLOGIES: Ms Debra Bell

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

1/2324 RECOMMENDED that the minutes of the Warrumbungle Road Network Advisory Group meeting held in Coonabarabran on 4 October 2023 be confirmed.

Shannon/Rodgers

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Nil

AGENDA ITEMS

a) Policy Review – Gates and Grids on Public Roads

DTS explained the process for adopting the policy. Once the Group is satisfied with the draft version it would be presented to a Council meeting seeking endorsement for public exhibition. The exhibition period gives the community, especially landholders affected by the policy, an opportunity to have a say and provide their feedback. Feedback on significant issues is reported back to Council and depending on the nature of the feedback the policy may be amended. From there the policy is usually endorsed by Council and implementation can begin.

The draft Gates and Grids on Public Roads Policy was discussed at length. All group members participated in the discussion and agreed to several amendments with the key ones being references to the Roads Regulation 2008 changed to the 2018 Regulations; clarification of the distance from either side of a grid that is to be maintained to be worded as written in the legislation “not exceeding 20m”; minimum width of a grid to be 4m; carrying capacity of grids to be minimum 14tonne/axle; amendment of the installation methodology to ensure grids are not creating wells that hold water; fleshing out of the Private Works option for landholders under the Maintenance clause; and updating of the specifications in Annexures A and B to reflect clauses 10.1 Gates and 10.2 Grids.

It was noted that the cost to purchase install a new 4m wide grid compliant with Australian Standards could be upwards of \$8,000. The impact of this could be that landowners may opt to remove grids and fence the road. This may cause another financial burden for the cost of fencing. Surveying of boundaries and width of road corridors was then discussed.

ACTION - DTS to come back to the Group with information on width of roads and road corridors as well as where landowners could source maps from.

Other matters related to the draft Gates and Grids on Public Roads Policy that were discussed included: -

- Options for Council to assist landholders with removal, maintenance, and/or installation of grids. It was noted that Council does Private Works where and this is always an option subject to resourcing and work schedules.
- Whether Council could complete inspections and/or any maintenance when performing routine maintenance resulting in a lower cost to the landowner.
- What happens to a grid bounded by a number of properties where no landowner takes ownership?
- The draft Policy is good for new grids.
- The application form needs to be simple and easy to follow.
- Management of retrospectives needs to be thought through.
- Having a lead time for people to become compliant should be considered in light of the potential costs to some landholders.
- All landholders affected by the draft Gates and Grids on Public Roads Policy should be contacted in some way before or during the public exhibition.

b) Natural Disaster Response and Recovery Update

- DTS provided an update on the Natural Disaster Response and Recovery works highlighting the level of funding received so far as well as key milestones and dates for expenditure of funds. It was noted that of three tenders advertised for Natural Disaster Restoration Works associated with the AGRN 987 event, preferred tenderers had been selected for Tenders 1 and 2 and contract documentation is being prepared. Tender 3 is under assessment with an outcome expected by the end of December 2023 and an information report will be provided to Council outlining all three tender outcomes in February 2024.
- DTS advised that Council has engaged two contractors, Rollers Australia and Rigour Excavations, to supply unsealed road maintenance crews to assist with the Natural Disaster Restoration Works. Both contractors have been with Council since August 2023.
- Cr Hogden stated that he had received a request from a landowner in the Dunedoo area that Council write to Rollers Australia and congratulate them for the work they had completed in the area at places such as Pine Ridge Road, Lawson Park Road and North Pine Ridge Road.

ACTION - DTS to write to Rollers Australia congratulate them for the work they had completed in the Dunedoo area at places such as Pine Ridge Road, Lawson Park Road and North Pine Ridge Road.

GENERAL BUSINESS

The following items were discussed without resolution:

- The Group should consider writing to the State and Federal Members when the time comes to see whether there is funding available to assist landholders with management of grids.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.30pm.

The next meeting will be held at the Coonabarabran Council Chambers on Monday 16 January 2024 commencing at 5.00pm.

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CHAIRPERSON