

**MINUTES OF THE COOLAH COMMUNITY CONSULTATION MEETING HELD IN  
COOLAH COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON MONDAY  
27 MARCH 2023 COMMENCING AT 5.30PM**

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**PRESENT:** Mayor Ambrose Doolan, Cr Kathy Rindfleish, Cr Denis Todd, Cr Holcombe, Cr Jason Newton, Cr Dale Hogden, Roger Bailey (General Manager), Gary Murphy (Director Technical Services) Leanne Ryan (Director of Environment and Development Services), Lindsay Mason (Director Corporate and Community Services DCCS), Ngaire Stevens (Manager of Community Services MCCS), Lisa Miller (Minute Taker), Bronwyn Drew, Greg Piper, Katie Burgess, Ted Miller, Lee Doyle.

**APOLOGIES:** Cr Kodi Brady, Cr Carlton Kopke, Cr Jason Newton, Cr A Iannuzzi (Deputy Mayor).

**INTRODUCTION:**

Mayor, Cr Ambrose Doolan welcomed attendees to the meeting and thanked attendees for attending. Cr Doolan acknowledged the councillors in attendance.

**MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING MONDAY 7 NOVEMBER 2022**

Minutes confirmed

**BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

**COMMUNITY MATTERS**

**1. Disability Inclusion and Access Committee (Bronwyn Drew)**

Bronwyn Drew queried if Council has a disability and inclusion committee.

MCCS confirmed with Ms Drew that she had not received her previous email answering her questions. Ms Drew confirmed that she had.

**2. Disability Inclusion Action Plan (Bronwyn Drew)**

When would council update the Disability Inclusion Action Plan.

MCCS advised that Council is updating the Disability Inclusion Action Plan. Council is currently working on the draft and all current attendees from past consultation meetings will be consulted.

**3. VPA and the Community enhancement fund and consultation with the community regarding the developments (Greg Piper)**

Greg Piper would like clarification of VPA's and how Council consults with the community as the community currently are not a part of the development decisions and are excluded from negotiations and would like advice of the guidelines.

DEDS advised the responsibility of Council regarding planning agreements is how Council will receive and disburse funds, with extensive community consultations via meetings with the community, submissions and department planning which are all reported bi-monthly on the Council website.

**4. Coolah's Swimming Pool's Acting Pool Supervisor (Katie Burgess)**

Katie Burgess began by acknowledging the excellent work of Nigel Baker as Acting Pool Supervisor.

**5. Coolah Swimming Pool showers (Katie Burgess)**

Katie Burgess addressed the dangerous showers at Coolah Pool and recommended a push button style with temperature regulation.

DTS advised that all pools in the Warrumbungle Shire are to be upgraded and are a 2023/2024 budgeted item and that the showers are looking to be timer and temperature regulated.

DTS also advised that Council has received a separate grant that will cover mechanical upgrades to the pools.

**6. Crossings on Coolah Creek Road up the Pandora Pass (Katie Burgess)**

DTS responded to the safety of crossings on Coolah Creek road up to Pandora Pass.

DTS advised Council maintains 5.9km from Coolah Creek Road, and in conjunction with Fresh Water Environment and NSW Fisheries, Council is looking at new causeway designs and the removal of the damage will be undertaken as part of the Natural Disaster Funding from the September 2022 event.

DTS addressed the egress and bushfire safety on Pandora Pass. It is not uncommon for landholders to have only one road access and they should prepare a Bushfire Survival Plan.

**7. Upgrade of the access road from Coolah Creek Road up to the Coolah National Park (Katie Burgess)**

DTS advised that there is a grant to seal Coolah Creek Road from the turn to Coolah Tops including road widening and guard rail installation to be started in February 2024 during off peak periods.

DTS acknowledged the hard work of Manager Roads in obtaining this grant to move forward.

**8. Painting of the front of the Coolah Swimming Pool (Katie Burgess)**

DTS invited budget submissions for the painting of the front of the Coolah Pool and advised that painting is considered a lower priority and is not currently budgeted. It was a project to be carried out by Rural Aid previously.

**9. Public toilet facilities in Coolah (Katie Burges)**

Katie Burgess advised that feedback from Rural Aid and buses that stopped at the Black Stump rest stop and McMaster Park, was that there is need for more public toilets including Bowen Oval which only has two toilets for use.

DTS advised that there is a report of the status of public toilets in the Shire on the Council website and that it is unlikely that more toilets will go in at McMaster Park or Bowen Oval in the 2023/2024 financial years.

CI Doolan stated that the NSW Labor Government has promised funds towards the upgrade of the disabled toilet at the back of the toilets at the Coolah Community Hall.

**10. Coolah Improvement for caravan and visitor access (Jo Murphy)**

Lee Doyle, on behalf of Jo Murphy, addressed the signage for caravans directed to use the by-pass and the dedicated parking for vans. Lee Doyle suggested the signage is confusing as it currently directs motorists to the caravan park to stay overnight and not to where the caravans are able to park. Lee Doyle also noted that the van parking currently has overhanging trees which are inhibiting the use by vans.

DTS concurred and the current signage would be revisited.

### **11. Inaccuracy of minute taking at the Coolah Community Consultation Meetings (Ted Miller)**

Ted Miller discussed the inaccuracy of Minutes recorded at the Community Consultation meeting of 7 November 2022 regarding the signage for Coolah at the other two entrances that are not sign posted.

GM asked that the correct details be emailed to Council for clarification and also advised that after engineering advice that the sign will not be refurbished at the end as it is deemed dangerous in this position.

## **COUNCIL UPDATES AND INFORMATION**

### **12. Budget**

The Director Corporate and Community Services provided an update on the 2023 -24 Budget.

- Staff are currently preparing the draft operating plan and budget
- Council will meet on 20 April 2023 to adopt the draft operating plan and budget
- The draft operating plan and budget will then go on public exhibition for 28 days, whereby the public can make submissions
- The final 2023/24 budget will be put to Council for adoption on 30 May 2023.
- The 2023/24 budget is heavily focussed on natural disaster recovery works on Council roads

### **13. Renewable Energy Zone**

The Director Environment and Development Services provided an update on the Central West Orana Renewable Energy Zone (REZ). Council continues to review the many EIS's and documents that are presented by Dept of Planning and EnergyCo, and have been actively lodging submissions as required. We are also attending meetings with REZ developers as required to discuss their projects. We remain concerned with the potential effects cumulative impacts from the REZ will have on our communities. Council currently has a draft Renewable Energy Benefit Policy on public exhibition open for comments

### **14. Inland Rail**

The Director Environment and Development Services provided an update on the Inland Rail project. The project connects Melbourne to Brisbane, will be located approx. 8kms from Baradine, with approx. 42kms of the rail line located within WSC. We are part of the N2N section, or the Narromine to Narrabri section. This section has now been approved by the State Government, and it is expected construction will commence in 24/25.

### **15. Road / Natural Disaster Claims**

The Director Technical Services provided an update on Roads and the Natural Disaster Claims. Key points being:

- 3 natural disasters declared in the last 18 months; November 2021, August 2022 and September 2022
- Largest natural disaster claim in the history of Warrumbungle Shire history currently in the order of \$12m with more to come
- Previous natural disaster claim was in the order of \$700,000
- Council typically spends \$6m a year on roads maintenance and \$6m on capital. The value of the restoration works is more than a full year's budget

- A specialist company has been engaged to log the over 1800 defects across the network and submit them to Transport for New South Wales for funding approval
- Originally 9 geographically distinct work packages were prepared and submitted
- Of these 8 have been approved.
- Council cannot carry out the restoration works until funding approval has been granted
- Council has been able to carry out emergency works to make safe and restore access
- It is important to note that funding is only available to restore the roads to pre-disaster condition. The funding does not allow to replace a causeway with a culvert for example or to re-sheet a road
- Determination of the damage caused by the August and September natural disaster is still in progress
- The restoration works must be completed by 30 June 2024
- Council does not have the staff and resources to carry out all of the works at once so Council has resolved to prioritise the high order (highly trafficked) roads first
- Council will also be issuing 3 tenders in the amount of \$500,000 each in order to get the work done
- In addition to the restoration works, Council has also been granted \$866,000 for pothole repairs and a further \$4.59m for repairs which have to be spent by the end of February 2024
- Key message is there is a lot of work, a lot of funding but little resources, plant and staff to do the works

#### **16. TRRRC**

The Director Environment and Development Services provided an update on TRRRC and the termination of legal action.

#### **GENERAL BUSINESS**

There being no further business, Mayor Doolan thanked all for coming.

**The meeting was closed at 7:00pm.**