

## Item 17 Lewis Lane, Dunedoo

<b>Division:</b>	Technical Services
<b>Management Area:</b>	Road Operations
<b>Author:</b>	Director Technical Services – Kevin Tighe
<b>CSP Key Focus Area:</b>	Public Infrastructure & Services
<b>Priority:</b>	P13 Roads throughout the Shire are safe, well maintained and appropriately funded.

---

### Reason for Report

The purpose of this report is to provide information in relation to a Notice of Motion regarding Lewis Lane.

### Background

The following resolution was made on the 20 November 2020:

***Item 27 Notice of Motion – Investigation into Lewis Lane Closure 146/2021 RESOLVED*** that Council be provided with a report from staff concerning the closure of the bridge located along Lewis Lane across the Talbragar River. That this report also deal with:

- *Where the funds from the wooden bridge replacement fund in the last Council have been transferred to*
- *The legality of the diversion of water from the properties Fairfield and Talbragar Park*
- *Why the northern end of Lewis Lane has not been resheeted with gravel*
- *Who authorised the staff to dig out the approaches to Lewis Lane bridge.'*

Lewis Lane intersects the Golden Highway approximately 3.5km east of Dunedoo. The Lane runs in a north south direction, it crosses the Talbragar River and it intersects with Lawson Park Road approximately 3.8km from the intersection of Lawson Park Road and Digilah Road.

The length of Lewis Lane is 3.4km. The length of Lewis Lane between the Talbragar River and the Golden Highway, which is on the southern side of the river, is 2.4km. The length of Lewis Lane on the northern side of the river that is between the river and Lawson Park Road is 1.0km. The first 1.0km off the Golden Highway is formed and surfaced with road base. The remaining 1.4km section on the southern side of the Talbragar River is partially formed, however there is no road base surfacing. Lewis Lane on the northern side of the river is not formed or constructed at all.

There are three different property owners adjoining Lewis Lane. On the southern side of the Talbragar River the land adjoining the road on both sides is owned by one property owner. The properties east and west of the road on the northern side of the river have different owners.

Due to storms early this year Lewis Lane is not currently being used as a through road between Lawson Park Road and the Golden Highway and it is not known when the road was last used as a through road. The detour around Lewis Lane is via Lawson Park Road, Digilah Road and the Golden Highway, which is a distance of 10.4km. If Lewis Lane was trafficable the travel time between Lawson Park Road and the Golden Highway would be reduced by an estimated 5.5 minutes.

The river crossing of Talbragar River is a low-level timber bridge, called Montague Bridge, which is thought to have originally been constructed in 1936. The bridge is a two-span bridge, with an overall length of 15.6 metres and a width of 5.4 metres and a height above the river bed of 1.2 metres. Following a Council resolution on the 16 June 2016 the timber deck was replaced with concrete and some of the timber girders were replaced with timber girders taken from a demolished bridge. Council also resolved to limit loads on the bridge to 20 tonnes due to the fact that some original timber components were still in place. The purpose of renewing the bridge was to provide local access across the river to the two property owners on the northern side of the river.

Water flowing over the bridge has washed away both the northern and southern approaches to the bridge. A current photograph of the bridge is provided in the attachments.

Council does not have records of carrying out works to Lewis Lane north of the bridge (except approach to the bridge). Alternative access to Lawson Park Road can be gained from the east via Pine Ridge Road.

## **Issues**

### Bridge Funding

The Timber Bridge Replacement Program commenced in 2012 and was primarily funded from a low interest loan scheme called Local Infrastructure Renewal Scheme (LIRS). Council specifically excluded the Montague Bridge from the bridge replacement program when a resolution was made in November 2012 on which bridges would be funded under the LIRS Program. Council did not allocate funds for the replacement of the bridge at that time. Thus there was no transfer of funds, because replacement of Montague Bridge was not included in the Timber Bridge Replacement Program.

### Water Diversion

It is understood that property owners are permitted to install contour banks on their land to control the direction and flowrate of overland drainage. Constructing a contour bank is an important tool in the prevention of soil erosion and contour banks are used to harvest water.

The Roads Act 1993 makes it clear that damage to a public road caused by the actions of an adjoining property owner must be rectified by that property owner. The contour bank within Talbragar Park directs overland drainage water in an easterly direction to Lewis Lane at a point 270 metres from the Golden Highway. The drainage water flows within table drains alongside the built-up road, crosses the road and exits the road 500 metres from the entry point. The road has suffered damage as a result of the overland drainage water being directed to the road, however the road is trafficable despite it being subjected to particularly high intensity rainfall in February and March 2020.

The Talbragar Park contour bank has been in existence for at least 10 years and overland stormwater drainage water collected by the contour bank has discharged into Lewis Lane during that time. The stormwater travelled down along the road and because the road lacked formation shape and a well-defined table drain, the water caused scouring and potholes in the surface of the road. Roadworks were undertaken in January

2020 with the aim of increasing the size of the table drain as well as improving the shape of the table drain. A causeway or rollover was constructed in the road surface to direct water from the western table drain to the eastern table drain. These works on the road were approved by Council in January 2020, but were undertaken by Talbragar Park. Had the roadworks not occurred, the damage to the road would have been significantly greater during the storms in February and April.

The drainage structures and road pavements on most rural roads are impacted by the farming activities that occur on the upstream side of the road. Overland drainage flowrate and direction are affected by many factors including but not limited to; construction of sheds, farming practices, contour banks, location and type of fences and land clearing. On most roads there are multiple properties contributing to increased flowrates and the impacts are mitigated through the construction of road infrastructure such as table drains, culverts, causeways and bridges.

Lewis Lane has been impacted by the actions of one property owner and the degree of that impact is above reasonably accepted practice simply because the contour bank has created the need for mitigation works to minimise damage to the road pavement.

Whilst drainage mitigation works are necessary on Lewis Lane due to the Talbragar Park contour bank, mitigation works are also necessary because the road cuts across natural water flow lines, which has the affect of concentrating water within the road reserve. Agreement may need to be reached between Council and Talbragar Park on the split in responsibility for water coming from the property and water collected by the road.

#### Northern End of Lewis Lane

The northern end of Lewis Lane is not included on the gravel resheeting program because this section of road is not included on the network of roads maintained by Council.

There is an anabranch to the Talbragar River that crosses the northern end of Lewis Lane, which means that any proposal to upgrade this section of the road will require approval and a permit under the Fisheries Management Act 1994.

#### Excavation of Bridge Approaches

The approaches to Montague Bridge have washed away because of the force of the water flowing in the Talbragar River. To Council's knowledge, no excavation works on the bridge approaches has occurred and certainly Council staff have not authorised excavation of the bridge approaches.

The removal of debris on the upstream side of the bridge is included on Council's list of maintenance works and the work should be completed prior to 31 December 2020. The best method of replacing road base in the washed-out approaches is being investigated and consultation with Department of Fisheries is required, however it is anticipated that this work could be completed by 1 March 2021.

#### **Road Damage**

Staff are to write to the owner of Talbragar Park giving direction to repair damage to Lewis Lane caused by diverting water via a contour bank from the property to the road.

#### **Financial Considerations**

There are no particular financial implications arising out of the questions being asked in relation to the condition of the road and the bridge.

The removal of debris on the upstream side of the bridge and work associated with filling in the washed-out approaches is estimated to cost \$10,000. The restoration of the bridge approaches has been included in Council's claim to the State Government for financial assistance to restore flood damaged roads.

### **Community Engagement**

The community scale and the community impact of this report is expected to be moderate and low respectively, therefore the level of community engagement is at the inform level only.

### **Attachments**

1. Current photograph of Montague Bridge.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That Council note:

1. The report on Lewis Lane, Dunedoo.
2. That Lewis Lane north of Montague Bridge across the Talbragar River is not included in the network of roads maintained by Council.
3. That the owner of Talbragar Park is to be directed to repair the damage done to Lewis Lane between 270 metres and 570 metre north from the Golden Highway.