

**FURNEAUX GROUP SHIPPING SPECIAL COMMITTEE
UNCONFIRMED MINUTES**

DATE: Monday 15 May 2023
VENUE: Rose Garden Room, FAEC, Whitemark \\
COMMENCING: 1.30pm

1. PRESENT

MEMBERS		
Position/Organisation	Name	In-Attendance
Mayor - Chairperson (non-voting)	Rachel Summers	Yes
Councillor (1)	Garry Blenkhorn	Yes
Councillor (1)	Vanessa Grace	Yes
General Manager - Flinders Council (non-voting)	Warren Groves	Yes
Agriculture/Livestock Sector (1)	Scott Wood	Apology
Cape Barren Island Aboriginal Association Incorporated (1)	Denise Gardner	No
Commerce/Business Sector (1)	David Bellinger	No
Department of State Growth (non-voting)	Arun Kendall (via Zoom)	Yes
Shipping Company – Bass Strait Freight (1)	David Harris (via Zoom)	Yes
Shipping Company – Eastern Line (1)	Warren Dick	No
Farming Sector (1)	Position to be filled	-
Flinders Island Business Incorporated (1)	Max Parker	No
TasPorts (1)	Craig Bull	No
Transport Sector (road on Flinders Island) (1)	Mark Pitchford	No
Community Representative (1)	Michelle Hirschfield	Yes
Biosecurity Tasmania Representative (1)	Andrew Carter	Yes
GUESTS		
TasPorts – Island Group Co-ordinator	Roy Berkin (via Zoom)	Yes
STAFF		
Executive Officer (Minute Taker)	Sue Mythen	Yes
Executive Assistant	Kyra Newman	Yes

2. DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTEREST – Councillors Only

Nil

3. CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Moved: Deputy Mayor Vanessa Grace **Seconded:** Andrew Carter

That the Unconfirmed Minutes of the Furneaux Group Shipping Special Committee from 14 February 2023 be confirmed.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. CORRESPONDENCE

2023.03.15 Nick Campion - Nomination for Shipping Committee

The Chair advised the position had been advertised and an application received from Nick Campion.

5. MEMBERSHIP

The committee to discuss Nick Campion's nomination and how to proceed.

Mayor Rachel Summer called for comments, and the committee voted on the appointment of Nick Campion to the position.

RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Michelle Hirschfield

Seconded: Cr Garry Blenkhorn

That Council approves Nick Campion as Farming Sector representative on the Furneaux Group Shipping Special Committee.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

6. TASPORTS UPDATE

Roy Berkin updated the committee:

Roy will be filling in on behalf of Crag Bull due to personal leave reasons.

TasPorts are continuing with maintenance, Roy is happy to take notes and escalate.

Andrew Carter had been working with Mark Harris regarding animal welfare but Mark has now left TasPorts. Andrew asked Roy who he should contact now?

Roy Berkin will note & let him know who new point of contact is.

7. BASS STRAIT FREIGHT UPDATE

The following item was deferred from the 14 February 2023 Furneaux Group Shipping Special Meeting for discussion at the 15 May 2023 Committee Meeting.

'Although David Harris was not in attendance at the meeting, he had provided the following as late agenda items:

6.1. *A request for the Flinders Island shipping Committee to support the Bridport Channel re-alignment to lower cost of freight to Flinders Island.*

This project has significant support in Bridport because, it's been on the agenda for nearly 20 years.

- It will open up the front beach to the town residents and tourists.*
- Place the end of the shipping channel into water 3 metres deep.*
- Shorten and straiten the channel so that it can be dredged by way of bed levelling to maintain a channel depth of 3.5 metres in all high tides*
- Eliminate sailings where we can't leave or arrive fully loaded. (Every 100 tonnes of freight increases vessel draft by 30 centimetres).*
- Allow vessel turn arounds on the same tide.*
- Create all tide access for trailer boats.*
- Allow better access for visiting fishing vessels and yachts. There is no all tide shelter and moorings between Beauty Point and St Helens*

Fixing the channel will reduce our costs by about \$1m per year. We think this development would lower freight rates to Flinders Island by about \$10.00 per tonne.

Bruny Island is receiving Government funding of \$2.5M to improve berthing arrangements and the ferry service is subsidised. King Island received \$2.4M for a new RORO ramp at Devonport and gets ongoing funding to run their ferry service of \$4M per year. All the work on the Bridport entrance and channel has been funded by

the Bales family and Flinders Island Shipping service operates without Government funding

David Harris updated the committee:

Bass Strait Freight (BSF) are still waiting on a response regarding tenure or stevedoring agreement. They are spending a lot of money at Bridport, new buildings and knocking the old shed down & removing all current contents so they can put in a cooler room/freezer room without running the containers. Will also put in 68,000L fuel tank (bundled), this will be cheaper than having deliveries 2-3 times per week.

At Lady Barron – once BSF secure tenure they will make freight system flow.

David Harris to email through map etc again to governance for distribution to the group.

They propose to move the office out of freight shed into the yard outside. Currently they handle on the weather side of the shed. Struggle to meet HAZOP (expand), must be HAZOP compliant supply chain regarding vermin, refrigeration etc. They need to operate off the weather side, which is on the road currently and this will stop people coming into the shed to get to the office which is a security issue.

They have been operating for 18 months now. The depth of water at Bridport is at best two metres and this can be restrictive; in fine weather sometimes the tide is an issue.

The current cost of freight is \$123 per cubic metre. There is an increase in the draft by 20 cm for every 100 tonne, the max weight is 300 tonne, sometimes they are restricted to 250 tonne which is lost income due to shallow access of the current channel.

If the ship comes in light & they could turn on the tide it would mean 30 percent saving. The third benefit is that if the weather is fine, they can take the opportunity for stock movements too. Could save costs by one million per year. If you look at what Government puts into other shipping services, this service is poorly supported.

David provided current costs for BSF.

The cheapest place is Cape Barren Island – as there are no TasPorts wharfage fees or stevedoring costs, however the facilities are terrible and they take their own forklifts for loading/unloading.

He said the solution is, that he has spoken to Mr Bales, can't dredge as water receding and a permit is required. Option to now do bed leveling, this is like dragging a scallop type trap and with prop wash it scows out the channel. If they move 0.5 km west on other side of rocky island off beach, would be three metre channel and could have access on all tides. Would also connect area at front of wharf giving 80 metre of sand. The Government has done studies and will extend beach by 3 times. David requested support from the committee to go to Government. He also added that he will send the report to Warren, it says it will cost \$35 million, included bridge, jetty but David feels could be done for between three to four million.

He put it to the committee that it is important infrastructure for Flinders Island, in relation to what's spent at King Island or Bruny. It could also drop the cost of shipping by \$10 per tonne and he claimed the Dorset Mayor is all for it.

Andrew Carter said it would be good to see the reports mentioned.

Mayor Rachel Summers asked David to please provide all information to Governance & she will read and consider at the next meeting whether to make recommendation to Council.

David added that he is planning to expand business to King Island. BSF are now running two boats and the Flinders freight is lower, plus there is now competition so BSF have capacity on both boats. The tenure at Lady Barron still an issue.

At recent Farmers meeting the other day farmers felt Flinders Island was being abandoned. David said he is running a business and has to find business for both ships.

Deputy Mayor Vanessa Grace asked: What is the problem with stevedoring? David responded that they (BSF) do themselves on Flinders, and this is considered illegal. Has not been issued with a licence, currently paying Qube. He did sign a licence when he purchased the company for six months but has not been able to come to terms with them. On King Island TasPorts do stevedoring

and things don't enter or leave the port directly. On Flinders it is handled directly at the port. State Government have come up with proposal but it is sitting with TasPorts still (approximately 18-months). David has investigated if they could load out of Devonport but still have not heard back.

MOTION

Moved: Deputy Mayor Vanessa Grace Seconded: Michelle Hirschfield
The Furneaux Group Shipping Special Committee requests an update on the stevedore licencing lease on normal commercial grounds.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Roy Berkin said TasPorts are also working with Eastern Line Shipping, adding they are working through it.

David Harris responded that handlers should not be allowed to operate diesel forklifts in confined space (i.e., container). He has bought two electric forklifts (both at Bridport). He has outlaid a huge amount of money and will be upset if the shed goes to Eastern Line Shipping. He added that BSF would probably pull out if this was the case.

Mayor Rachel Summers responded that the Committee would get in touch with TasPorts and seek clarification.

6.2. Plans to develop the Lady Barron Freight Shed to meet HACCP (expand) food safety certifications, improve security and make the flow of freight more systematic.

Covered in above: Refer to plans and aerial map showing traffic plans to be supplied by David Harris.

8. TRANSPORTATION OF FOOD

The Chair will update the committee of any correspondence with David Harris, enquiring about refrigerated food transport from the port to Whitemark, in particular, concerns about refrigeration of the food and general food safety.

Discussed in items above and addressed in other business below.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 Andrew Carter to update the committee on finalised animal welfare protocols.

Andrew advised that Mark Harris took the lead and he has sadly left TasPorts. If the Group has any questions please send through to Andrew on this matter.

Biosecurity has put together pamphlets and given copies to BSF and Eastern Line Shipping, and tabled copies for those present. They would like to have these put up on the Council website.

Mayor Rachel Summers asked that a pdf be emailed to Governance for uploading, and also look at getting some into Service Tasmania also.

David Harris advised that there are incidents regarding machinery coming over that is dirty – Containers covered in mud and recently a bailer.

Andrew Carter said anyone bringing things to Flinders Island gets a better service than most, they ring people beforehand to stop dirty things being shipped. They have no mandate at Welshpool, hence the pamphlet.

David added that the ships unloaded at night and crew were in a hurry, so items haven't been cleaned. Peter Stoitse Transport Pty Ltd are the shipping representative who deliver their freight to the port, he queried if Biosecurity have visited Stoitse?

Andrew responded that people don't find out until it arrives at Stoitse that items are not clean, the owner pays them to clean but this is still not being done properly. It then gets rectified at Lady Barron – have had couple of items sent to Bell Bay to be cleaned before they can come back. The owner must pay for this process, hopefully they get the message and ensure items are cleaned to standard before shipping them to the Island.

David responded by asking if the general public realised what is happening – suggesting making an example of them and displaying costs.

Andrew said the quarantine facilities and holding bay had no space, and material can blow into the surrounding area. Clean is considered – 'as clean as new'. He is happy to raise with Biosecurity the possibility of training for cleaning. The cleaning can't be done on island as there is nowhere for the wash off to be captured and treated appropriately. Cost to install proper washdown facility would need to be able to treat containers and large trucks. There are currently one at Powranna and one at Bell Bay. The best option is to make sure items are treated before going on the boat.

9.2 Other Business:

David Harris referred back to point, '8. *TRANSPORTATION OF FOOD*'.

He stated he has just spent large dollars on plant. He would be moving from items packed at Launceston to the consolidation of food in Bridport. He can't have 3 HAZOP sheds (too expensive). He talked about grocery deliveries through Southern Regional Transport to Bridport, Scottsdale etc. He has planned investment of \$300,000plus for fridge and freezer units at Bridport and the same at Lady Barron but this is still 2 years away.

The Chair asked, what about people who have groceries from Woolworths or Coles, this would be an extra cost to people if they have to get delivered (couriered) to Bridport?

David responded that Walkers is a full container, but there are dozens of small individual orders which is very labour intensive.

The Chair added that a people had a lot of dietary needs that are not available locally, so need to order items in. David responded that - well we will have to continue to supply it. He also added that currently freight is inefficiently handled to Flinders Island and costly to BSF and that if it wasn't for livestock freight & fertiliser, they could not do it.

Councillor Garry Blenkhorn asked if the saving of \$30 per tonne, if they consolidate at Bridport not Launceston, will you pass savings on?

David said they have a rate ex Launceston and ex Bridport already. Walkers are not very keen on this proposal, but the change proposed.

BSF are looking at moving from paper-based consignment notes to a digitised system.

10. NEXT MEETING DATE: Monday 7 August 2023

11. CLOSE OF MEETING: 2:36pm