

FURNEAUX GROUP SHIPPING SPECIAL COMMITTEE UNCONFIRMED MINUTES

DATE: Thursday 2 May 2019
VENUE: Flinders Arts and Entertainment Centre, Rose Garden Room
COMMENCING: 10.00 am

ATTENDEES:

Mayor A Revie	Chair (non-voting)
Cr Vanessa Grace	Council
Bill Boehm	General Manager (non-voting)
Mark Cooper	Manager North, TasPorts
Grant Hall	Farmer Representative
Michelle Hirschfield	Community Representative
Arun Kendall	DoSG (non-voting) (via phone)
Mick Rose	FIBI representative
Vacant	Commerce Representative
Vacant	Shipping Company Representative
Vacant	Transport Representative

APOLOGIES:

Cr Aaron Burke	Council
Denise Gardner	CBIAA
Scott Wood	Livestock Representative
Chris Murphy (Qube)	Guest (non-voting)

GUESTS:

Darrell Clark	Senior Commercial Manager, TasPorts
Reece Cropper	General Manager, TasPorts
Anthony Donald	A/CEO, TasPorts

STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:

Vicki Warden	Executive Officer (minute taker)
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DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTEREST:

At the 14 December 2017 Council Meeting, Council resolved the following motion:

1. *“That Council agrees to grant exemption from pecuniary interest to the community members appointed to all of its Special Committees for a period of 12 months.*
2. *That Council again considers the pecuniary interest of community members on its Special Committees at the December 2018 Ordinary Meeting of Council.”*

In accordance with Part 2 Regulation 8 (7) of the Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2015, Councillors are requested to advise of a pecuniary interest in respect to any matter appearing on the agenda, or any supplementary item to the agenda.

No pecuniary interest was declared.

CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:

Moved: Cr V Grace Seconded: M Hirschfield

That the unconfirmed minutes from the meeting held on the 26 February 2019 are a true record.

CARRIED

CORRESPONDENCE IN & OUT:

Nil

AGENDA ITEMS

Item 1. Representations to the Committee

Representations to the Committee were called via Island News, Flinders Council Facebook and Community Noticeboard Facebook, closing on 29 April. No representations were received.

Item 2. Committee Membership

Nominations for the position of Transport Representative and Commerce / Business Representative were called again via Island News, Flinders Council Facebook and Community Noticeboard Facebook, closing on 29 April. No expressions of interest were received.

Item 3. Wharfage Charges

In January 2018, Jeff Phillips (previous transport representative) did a comparison of wharfage charges based on information on the TasPorts website and found that in a number of areas Flinders is being charged more than King and in other areas charged the same as Bell Bay and Hobart. At the October meeting this apparent inequity was discussed and Darrell Clark, Commercial Manager Resources, TasPorts, agreed to review Jeff's comparison and report back with further information at an upcoming meeting.

Darrell advised that TasPorts has recently undertaking a major review of scheduled charges at city and regional ports across the state in order to establish a benchmark for charging. They are currently using this benchmark to review all their charges across the state. TasPorts will be increasing general charges across Tasmania by 2.5%. Rates for livestock and large animals will also increase. Currently there is a significant difference in rate for small animals between Flinders and King with Flinders paying much less than King. This will be standardised in the future.

Differences in port facilities and operations are taken into consideration when deciding charges e.g. livestock holding facilities on Flinders are large enough to hold a boat load, on King there's a small holding area as the majority of animals travel on trailer rather than on hoof, so there is considerably less maintenance required.

The current scheduled port charges are on TasPorts' website. Once the review is finalised (anticipating end of May) the charges for the next financial year will be added to the website and will come into effect on 1 July.

ACTION: Mark Cooper to inform committee when new rates are available on the website.

Anthony Donald remarked that TasPorts has adopted a 'no surprises' approach and wishes to use this committee to float changes in the future. This comment was welcomed by committee members.

Item 4. Port Update – Mark Cooper - TasPorts Regional Manager North

Mark Cooper, Manager North, TasPorts, provided the following update for the Committee on 16 April 2019:

“The water troughs are now in all the pens. This has been completed. Matting was removed from the main race and from the exits to the pens (where the animals were reportedly slipping when exiting to the main race). Multiple observations by us show that they are no longer slipping. The area at the bottom of the race where it narrows has been re-concreted. We have roughed up the concrete at the top of the race and this seems to be working. Should it be required, we will add a layer of chequered or grooved concrete. Blinding has been installed in the pens. Additional rub bars and padding installed in rub areas.”

Mark provided a further update on activities undertaken by TasPorts to improve the stock yards to reduce animal injury and noted that they still need to concrete the top section to reduce slipping. Russell Hunter from DIPIPWE recently inspected the yards and said he was happy with them. TasPorts will continue to do whatever they can to improve the stock yards.

Containers in the top yards have been removed by the private owner. TasPorts took photos of the condition of the static refrigeration containers and sent them to Furneaux Freight.

The yard surface needs attention to smooth it out. A sump pump has been installed to remove water going under the pavers. One new casual staff has been appointed to do maintenance and cleaning of stock yards. A new fuel truck has been sourced and should arrive in 2 weeks. At the fuel depot, preventative work is being undertaken on the tanks along with some earth works and new fencing. A chain has been installed on the Whitemark Wharf to stop vehicles driving on it and other works have been undertaken on the wharf to improve the amenity.

The possibility of installing a wash down area for vehicles was discussed. The Government did a research paper on the need for wash down facilities and announced they will fund wash downs at various locations in Tasmania. Lady Barron was not included. Anything that leaves another port must be cleaned before it arrived here, and if not, it is returned. Wash down facilities would be useful here but it can be mitigated for now.

Item 5. Animal Welfare

Ensuring the safety of animals moving from the holding yards to and from the boat is of paramount concern to the Committee.

Many of the cattle leaving the Island go to mainland producers for value adding. Some of these producers are reluctant to buy stock from Finders again due to the high percentage of injuries. The whole process - from leaving the Flinders property to destination on the mainland - needs to be scrutinised to reduce injury rate. Letter from Tasmanian Feedlot to Elders identifies work that needs to be done to the ramp going from bottom deck to top deck on the Matthew Flinders. The ramp is short and the pitch is too great for the stock to travel comfortably without injury. Roberts discussed this issue with Furneaux Freight 12 months ago, but no remedial work has been undertaken. Tasmania Feedlot is reluctant to buy further stock until the ramp is fixed.

TasPorts has done everything it can to slow the animals down and reduce slipping in yards. On the boat, the ramp is the main issue. Furneaux Freight provides an excellent service to the Island and modification to the ramp would improve that service even more. For the welfare of the livestock and the reputation of the Island, it is important that this ramp be fixed as soon as possible.

Detailed discussion ensued on the comparison of injury rate between transporting on hoof and on trailer. King Island changed about 4 years ago to transporting all livestock on trailers. Trailers are of benefit to producers as animals are in better condition when they arrive, with less injuries and nil death. Trailers also reduce handling of animals and time of transportation. If Flinders continues to transport on hoof, need to have the same injury and death rate as transportation by trailer.

Furneaux Freight has announced they are building a new boat to replace the Matthew Flinders. Farmers would like the boat to be trailer friendly. Cattle numbers will continue to increase on the Island and 600 cattle single file on boat is inefficient. Trailers would bring efficiencies in transportation.

The biggest impediment to longevity on the Island is animal welfare and the way we are perceived by producers.

To limit exposure to animal welfare litigation, Michelle Hirschfield would like to see a formalised euthanasia procedure in place. Tasports has asked Russell Hunter to put guidelines together. Mark is currently working on guidelines as to TasPorts' expectations of animal care, euthanasia and use of the yards at the port. These guidelines will be distributed for comment.

Moved: G Hall Seconded: M Hirschfield

That the Committee recommends that Council write to Furneaux Freight expressing concerns regarding loading livestock to and from the top deck of the Matthew Flinders and inviting Furneaux Freight to participate in future dialogue with the Committee.

CARRIED

Moved: M Hirschfield Seconded: V Grace

That the Committee recommends that Council contacts DIIPWE with a request to develop, as soon as possible, an appropriate livestock euthanasia procedure that can be implemented for use at the Lady Barron Port, to minimise the Community's exposure to animal welfare litigation.

CARRIED

Item 6. Terms of Reference

The Committee agreed to postpone review of the Terms of Reference to the next meeting. Bill asked committee members to think about the option of changing from a special committee to an advisory board, or similar, that stands alone from council.

Item 7. Furneaux Freight

The Mayor has contacted Furneaux Freight regarding re-joining the Committee and is waiting for their return call.

ACTION: Annie Revie to write to Furneaux Freight.

Item 8. Other Business

Rubbish Bin at Wharf

Council removed the rubbish skip from the Lady Barron Wharf area as people were misusing it and using it for household waste. There aren't any other bins in Lady Barron and rubbish is being left everywhere. In order to maintain the amenity, TasPorts asks that council review this decision and install a bin with a small opening.

ACTION: Bill Boehm to discuss with the Works Manager to find a solution.

NEXT MEETING:

MEETING CLOSED: