

## **FIBI BOARD MEETING NOTES**

### **Item 5.5 Tourism Project Officer**

The recommendation here is that FIBI seeks support from Council and from King Island in requesting from Tasmanian Government funds for a part time Tourism / Business Project Officer based on the Island.

Michael spoke to me informally about an idea of how Council support could be provided - I am open to the idea but we have not discussed the idea further. As Mayor, I am never in the position to make decisions on any matters – all decisions must be made by the full Council, in collaboration with Council staff, mainly the General Manager. This would have to happen before Council would be able to respond further to such a request.

In regard to seeking support from King Island, two of our Councillors have recently returned from a trip to King Island. They report that King Island Council is keen to work with Flinders Council in lobbying the State and Federal Governments. However I believe we have to do this cautiously, especially where the State Government is concerned. State Government has tended to operate with the Island Councils in competition rather than jointly. I believe that careful thinking has to be utilised in this regard in order to gain mutual success.

### **Item 5.8 – Flinders Island Airport**

The airport has been an ongoing priority for Council over the last 15 months. The main issues include:

- It is well known that the upkeep of the airport is a significant drain on Council funds, with particular regard to capital works. Approximately \$220,000 is required each year to maintain the airport at break-even status.
- An Airport Master Plan was created in 2012 to serve the future planning of the facility over a 20-year period. The plan looked at all aspects of the airport's functioning: runways, buildings, carparking etc.
- Now, 8 years on, the runway upgrade is the first major aspect of the facility attended to – this was a CASA requirement
- The long runway is currently being upgraded to CASA standard to the tune of \$3.6 m.
- The short runway will require upgrade within the next ten years to the amount of approximately \$2.5 million.
- Council's current funding status is challenging.
- Council successfully negotiated with State and Federal Governments over the last year:
  - Of the \$4.8 m granted by the Coalition to the Safe Harbour project in the lead up to the 2019 Federal Election, \$1.8m has been transferred at Council's request to the already-granted \$1.8m – this meant that the long runway upgrade would be fully funded.
  - The remaining \$3m of the original funding will be spent on the redesign and building of a scaled-down safe harbour.
- I chair a Council Aviation Special Committee whose objective is to recommend to Council regarding aviation access to the Island, including the airport.
- The Aviation Special Committee has been inactive for the last twelve months because there has been nothing new to report. At its only meeting in the last year, a question was asked regarding whether or not it was efficient for the Council to maintain ownership of the airport.
- Since that time, the airport has been the subject of so much unfinished business – mainly Council's working with the State and Federal Governments. There has been nothing to share with the committee or the community – because working with government has to remain confidential until agreement has been reached – and it takes a long time. We are still working with State Government on this one. Before we can make a decision, significant work has yet to be done, including:
  - Exploration of the effect of recent changes to methodology re Council's Federal Government Grants on future ownership of the airport;

- Exploration of the situation with the Aviation Committee when Council knows the lie of the land;
- Engagement with the Community on Council ownership of the airport.
- In December 2019, Council met with Malcolm Sharp, Director of Sharp Airlines.
  - Both he and Council are open to discussing a partnership
  - We have still to explore what such a partnership would entail as well as how Council and the airline could work together to benefit both the airline and the community?

I hope FIBI Board understands that none of these things are straightforward. When Council is working with State and Federal Governments and our Regular Passenger Airline, confidentiality has to be maintained until agreements have been reached – and this can take a long time.

### **Council's progress with the Safe Harbour Project**

As I alluded to in the airport report, Council now has the promise of \$3m to redesign and construct a safe harbour. Council is planning a workshop in the next week or so on the project. The objective will be to scope what Council wants from this project.

Following the scoping, Council must decide on the next steps and then set things moving. As the project progresses Council will maintain communication with FIBI and the original proponents of the project.

### **Shipping Committee**

The Furneaux Shipping Committee is travelling well. Some improvements over the last 12 months include:

- Committee members understand the Committee role better – they are a committee that facilitates identification of solutions around the transportation of freight from source to destination.
- The committee now has a representative for Furneaux Freight, Darren Grace.
- It also has a representative for Bio Security – Animal Welfare – Russell Hunter from DPIPWE
- The committee now has a full complement of reps from: FIBI, Transport, Business, Furneaux Freight, Councillors and Council Staff, Farmers, Stock Agents (including an observer from Elders), TasPorts
- Tasports Rep is Mark Cooper, Manager North has agreed to discuss the \$900,000 allotted to Tasports against the Safe Harbour Project, with the committee, providing an avenue for input.
- I believe the culture on the Committee is very positive.
- Examples of topics discussed include: Stevedoring, Animal Welfare, Training of personnel involved in transport of freight, the needs of various represented groups, etc