

**FURNEAUX GROUP SHIPPING SPECIAL COMMITTEE MEETING  
UNCONFIRMED MINUTES**

**DATE:** Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2022  
**VENUE:** Carpet Room, FAEC, Whitemark  
**COMMENCING:** 1.00pm

**PRESENT:**

Mayor A Revie	Chair
Cr Vanessa Grace	Council
Warren Groves	General Manager
David Bellinger	Commerce Representative
Darren Grace	Furneaux Freight Representative
Craig Bull	TasPorts Representative
Cr Aaron Burke	Council
Michelle Hirschfield	Community Representative
Mark Pitchford	Transport Representative
David Harris	Bass Strait Freight Representative

**GUESTS:**

Nigel Brown	Elders Livestock Agent
Chandra Kaladindi	TasPorts Project Manager of Lady Barron Port Works
Chris Durrant	Elders State Livestock Agent
Andrew Carter	Flinders Bio Security
Sam Grace	Flinders Bio Security
Tim Smith	Batchelor Civil Contracting Supervisor
Aaron Turner	Qube

**STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:**

Rowena Gill	Administrative Services Officer
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**APOLOGIES:**

Mick Rose	FIBI Representative
Grant Hall	Farmer's Representative
Russell Hunter	Biosecurity Tasmania Representative (via phone)
Scott Wood	Livestock Representative
Arun Kendall	Department of State Growth Representative

**DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTEREST:**

At the 14 December 2018 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 2020 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.

Nil declared

**CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:**

Moved: V Grace      Seconded: A Burke  
 That the minutes from the meeting held on 19 August 2021 are a true record.  
 Carried

**CORRESPONDENCE IN:**

Nil

**CORRESPONDENCE OUT:**

Nil

**GENERAL BUSINESS****1. Welcome & Introductions:**

Chair Annie Revie introduced and welcomed those who had not previously attended Furneaux Group Shipping Special Committee Meetings and explained the purpose of the committee as “to provide recommendations to Flinders Council on shipping matters, including port and associated infrastructure where it relates to shipping.”

**2. Bass Strait Freight:**

Managing Director, David Harris introduced himself and provided a history of the purchase of the assets of Furneaux Freight, which he and three other partners acquired on the 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2021. David is keen to maintain a good working relationship with the previous owners, the Bales Family, and is currently leasing the yard in Bridport from them. David is looking forward to resolving the tension between stakeholders: TasPorts; Qube and Furneaux Freight. David is keen to improve the relationships with all by working closely with Craig Bull from TasPorts, asking for patience, especially while the port upgrade is occurring. David also wants to refine Bass Strait Freight operations, one of which is to acknowledge that the port is a transit zone, not a storage zone.

An agreement is in the pipeline with David Conn, to use a portion of Sapphire farm to construct a Bass Strait Freight depot/storage facility, which will hold the uncollected freight, as BSF will only store freight for up to 48 hrs from delivery at the Wharf, after which customers will be charged for storage. Fuel storage will be incorporated as currently Bass Strait Freight has only one tanker to store and distribute fuel. With the new boat having the capacity to carry under-deck fuel storage, there is a need to have storage on island.

Two more skippers are to be employed and more staff to allow for rotation of crews and maximise sailings using both boats.

Bass Strait Freight (BSF) is in discussion with Marine and Safety Tasmania (MAST) about their desire to make Bridport an all-tide port, by shortening the current channel, and creating a 3 metre deep section allowing for use in all tides. There was mention that 35 million has been allocated to achieve this project.

## Points to note:

- Aim to keep freight rates the same, if possible.
- Two sailings will occur from now on over the Christmas and New Year period.
- Turnover since take over is up 25%: an increase in fertiliser from 1500 to 5000 per year to the island; and significant machinery being brought over for various contractor jobs, including Palana Road. Also, a crushing plant was transported, which took up a whole boat and put pressure on capacity. Now, with only one boat operating, it is a struggle to keep up. David notes the complaints about fertiliser being slow to arrive on island.
- Many of the assets purchased are old and require replacing, which requires considerable investment and may take 5 years to achieve the standard they desire.
- Aim to reduce fuel price to match that at Scottsdale.
- New Boat, Matthew Flinders 4, is 35 metres long. It will hopefully be ready for service by the end of February and could improve capacity to bring freight to the island by 30%. It can carry 300 tonnes of freight. It can steam at around 12 knots

and do the crossing in 6 hours from Bridport to Lady Barron; It can carry 36 passengers in air-conditioned comfort. David mentioned a long-term plan to cut this boat in half and add another 15 meters then to introduce a stabiliser to improve comfort for the journey – for both passengers and livestock

- Matthew Flinders 3, still has an approximate life of 20 years, will continue to move stock and fertiliser. David recognises there is a need to improve the current deck, as it is quite slippery for livestock, and they often arrive tired from the journey.
- There is room to expand the Welshpool side of the business, with regular sailings. There could be an increase in the rate per cubic metre per nautical mile. Note there is no proper depot in Welshpool.
- Opportunity for removing scarp metal on island backfilling containers. Also carting fertilizer over to the island and waste material back in custom made containers.

Any questions or feedback please contact David on his direct phone number, which is available on the Bass Strait Freight website.

### 3. TasPorts:

Chandra last updated the committee in August 2021, regarding the upgrade work at the Lady Barron Port. There have been delays with budget, and sourcing materials. Batchelor Civil Contracting was secured as the contractor and started preliminary work in mid-January.

Tim Smith is the onsite contact for Batchelor Civil Construction Engineering. He provided an update, as well as his observations on the current wharf - it appears to be very busy for a small wharf.

No work on concrete has started yet, as the on-island aggregate was not suitable to use to gain the high strength concrete required for the project. The plan is to bring aggregate over in bulker bags from mainland Tasmania before they recommence work on the 7<sup>th</sup> March, aiming for completion before end of June 2022, working in ten day swings over weekends. The entire job requires approximately 1200 cubic metres of concrete and they will aim to pour 70-100 cubic metres in a day, pouring in grid sections. Tim agreed that an onsite meeting with stakeholders would help them understand the processes involved. This will be organised by Tim.

It is hoped to complete the work with minimal interruptions and interference, maintaining access to the wharf via the ramps as they work.

These ramps are narrow and challenging. For the ramp directly onto the boat there may have to be a 7 to 10 day closure of the wharf to redo this section. Steel sheets could be used to keep this area operational if required. Happy to work in with what island needs.

Suggestions to wait for all dry cows to be shipped off island in April. Important to pin down a date and communicate to the community, Council could assist with this through the Council Facebook page and community noticeboard.

The drainage system under the new wharf may prove tricky, due to granite rocks underneath. A trench may need to be dug through the public wharf area to discharge water.

Other comments were made around there being no wash down facility in Bridport or Lady Barron ports. A facility would need to meet bio security requirements which then makes it not so profitable to operate so no one wants to construct one and take ownership at the moment.

#### 4. Animal Welfare

The question was raised does TasPorts have policy on humane destruction of an animal in the port zone? Clear direction is needed on who's responsible and on the procedure to follow in the event of serious injury to cattle.

On King Island, where there is a full-time Vet, the procedure is:

- The Port Supervisor is notified
- They contact the vet
- The Vet destroys the animal and arranges disposal

Flinders Island has no formal procedure in place and stakeholders are unsure of their responsibilities and liability when stock must be euthanised.

Andrew Carter discussed the recent animal welfare issue at Lady Barron Port. He acknowledged the shifting responsibilities, as the animal moves from farm, to transporter, to wharf, to boat, to transport, to feedlot or new property. With so many people in the chain, this can create confusion. He is happy to head up a small subcommittee to draft a procedure. It will begin with direction from TasPorts, then working with Tasmanian Police, Livestock agents, and boat skippers to ensure that, when stock are on the wharf, there is always someone present:

- who is licensed and has ready access to an appropriate weapon;
- who is approved and capable to euthanise an animal.

The following were recommended for the small group:

- Andrew Carter, Bio Security
- Craig Bull, Tasports
- Scott Wood, Livestock Agent
- Chris Durant, Livestock Agent
- Darren Wills, Shipping Representative from BSF
- Chris Parr, Tas Police
- Aaron Turner, Qube

Qube offered to share other policies, which may help to create a draft document.

The aim is for the subcommittee to meet via Zoom if needed, in the first two weeks of March. Rowena to liaise with Andrew Carter regarding a suitable date and time and arrange zoom meeting with relevant parties.

Bass Strait Freight require incident reports to be completed if an animal in distress on the boat has to be euthanised.

#### **MOTION**

**Moved: Chris Durrant**

**Seconded: Michelle Hirschfield**

**That an animal welfare subcommittee of the Furneaux Group Shipping Special Committee be formed, including representatives from Biosecurity, TasPorts, Tasmanian Police, livestock agents from Elders and Nutrien, Qube and Bass Strait Freight.**

**CARRIED**

Note:

Biosecurity would like to see greater communication around sailings of stock to ensure animal welfare is monitored.

Bass Strait Freight would like to see more feedback from livestock agents and feedlots about stock that are euthanised at any stage of transportation from source to destination.

### **Other Business**

Wharf Maintenance - David Bellinger made note of some issues recently where cattle could be injured from sharp edges, and sections of the race cut out. Portable race material has been ordered to repair these by Garth.

The process to report maintenance needed is to send email to Craig Bull at TasPorts. He will hand over to operations coordinator, which in turn instructs Garth on what is required. Craig to provide maintenance report at each meeting.

Matthew Flinders 4 – David Harris is proposing to have an open boat day and ceremony on Island at the end of March to honour the Bales family and their service to the island, including renaming the new boat the Matthew Bales

### **Next Meeting**

On site meeting at wharf with Tim Smith from Batchelor Civil for those interested then move to Lady Barron Hall for an actual meeting, suggest end of March between 21<sup>st</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> while Batchelor Civil contractors are on Island.

**Meeting Closed: 3.01 pm**