



NOTES FROM THE MAYOR

CARERS WEEK

13th to 19th October has been designated as National Carers Week. We often do not know who the people are in our community who are full-time carers. Caring for a relative or friend is a role that people do not always want to publicise. But it is important to acknowledge the amazing work that such people do.

Caring can be almost a full-time role and it can be very taxing and tiring.

Carers can be responsible for caring for children, young adults, spouses or parents as well as friends or more distant relatives.

I am sure that Carers sometimes wonder if they have a life of their own. There is a magazine produced every few months by Carers Tasmania. A copy was recently sent to me and it has some very beneficial, easy-to-read articles. I will place it in Reception in the front office of Council. Anyone can borrow it. Please feel free to check with Zeer or Mel if it is available.

Please spare some thoughts for people who are doing this amazing job.

WORK WILL BE CARRIED OUT IN LADY BARRON BY TASWATER

You may remember that last summer the Henderson Dam did not have enough water to serve Whitemark. In fact, water had to be carted by truck from Lady Barron each day to enable Whitemark to have enough water over summer.

We seem to have had quite a lot of rainfall this winter, but Flinders is actually a pretty dry place and it is predicted that Whitemark will have ongoing problems with its water supply if nothing is done about it.

TasWater is proposing to enlarge the Henderson Dam to increase the storage capacity for Whitemark. This could occur in our Summer months next year.

Council had a workshop with TasWater recently, and there was an agenda item this month where Council voted to support an in-principle consideration of a temporary desalination plant at Lady Barron, while the work to enlarge the dam is being carried out.

The preferred site for the temporary desalination plant will be at the slipway off Franklin Parade. Boats will still be able to be launched while the work is in progress.

There is still much work to be evaluated in this area so Council will keep the community informed, and there will be an upcoming development application for the temporary desalination plant.

NEWS ON THE AIRPORT AND ON THE SAFE HARBOUR PROJECT

By now most of the community knows about the following:

- Council's finances are currently challenged;
- The long runway at the airport is in need of an urgent upgrade;
- The Safe Harbour Project was offered \$4.8 million back in March of this year.

SO WHAT IS HAPPENING RE THE AIRPORT?

The Federal Government approved a grant of \$1.8m for half of the \$3.6 million needed to upgrade the long runway. Council needs to fund the remaining \$1.8 million of the work.

AND SAFE HARBOUR?

The Federal Government offered \$4.8 million to complete the Safe Harbour Project. State Government gave \$900k to TasPorts and this will be used to ensure Port improvements that will contribute to the success of the Safe Harbour Project.

The Current estimate of the Safe Harbour Project is \$5.7 million and Council has had major concerns regarding the ongoing costs of depreciation, operation, and maintenance.

At the last Council meeting, Council unanimously voted to apply to the Federal Government to allow a proportion of the Safe Harbour \$4.8m funding (1.8m of it) to be used to fund the shortfall of the Airport runway upgrade. We have commenced lobbying in this

regard, and if successful, this will enable the Airport Upgrade to be 100% funded and this will still leave \$3m for a scaled back version of the Safe Harbour Project.

THIS OFFERS A WIN / WIN SOLUTION

At the Ordinary Council meeting on Tuesday 17th September, Council approved a motion:

- To seek the modified funding arrangement from the Federal Government;
- To rescinds parts 1 & 2 of Motion 88.03.2019 (to reject Council ownership of the Safe Harbour) and agrees to the Council ownership and responsibility for the Safe Harbour site and proposed breakwater and boat ramp, **subject to the determination of a sustainable, low-risk, management model that addresses Council's maintenance and depreciation concerns.**
- Creates and supports a Project Advisory Group (Management Committee), with appropriate Terms of Reference and membership to oversee, monitor and advise the management of the project, and that reports to the Council on a regular basis regarding project implementation; and
- Appoints Burbury Consulting as the initial Project Manager to coordinate and deliver the design phase of the project, up to and including the preparation of a business case and associated actions, to allow a 'shovel-ready' request to Government for \$3 million funding.

The Project offers many potential benefits to the Island if a modified design can present a low risk option for Council.

We will keep the community informed on the progress of both the Airport upgrade and the Safe Harbour project.

ANNIE REVIE, Mayor

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FROM COUNCIL'S COMMUNITY RATES AND BUDGET FORUM (HELD ON 4TH SEPTEMBER 2019)

1. Question:

Concerns on the quality of our roads and questioned the specifications of our roads to carry heavy vehicles. Comment was "Some new roads are falling apart, and some gravel roads are not up to scratch. Are the roads up to spec to carry the size of heavy trucks?"

Response:

In response to this question, I have asked Brian Barnewall (Council Works and Airport Manager) to provide an overview of the history and current methodologies relating to our road network.

Excerpt from Brian Barnewall's report:

"History and Construction Methods

Sealing of the main connector roads began in the 1960's and completed in the early 1990's (Lucks and Melrose Rd).

The process for this was to either mix lime sand (approximately 18%) with existing road gravel (to minimise the clay content) or add another layer of mixed gravel to areas that were deficient in gravel depth (150mm). This would involve carting the lime sand to the area to be mixed with trucks in the mixing process of a section approximately 400 mts long, the lime sand was blade mixed using 2 graders (2 hours) then mixed with a tractor and rotary hoe (2 hours). The section was then blade mixed and rotary hoed a second time before water was mixed in with the gravel mix to provide optimum moisture content for compaction.

The water mixing involved 2 graders and 2 water trucks and depending on the daytime temperature, wind speeds and distance from water source, could take anywhere from 1.5 to more than 3 hours. The watered mix was then rotary hoed again (2 hours) and then spread across the road, rolled in (tractor and multi tyred roller), graded to finished level and then compacted.

Total time for a 400 metre section could vary between 13 and 16 hours and was usually done

in the one day therefore creating much overtime for machinery operators.

If a bitumen road section was being reconstructed a further 2- 3 hours could be added for scarifying, cutting off and carting away the sealed wearing layer before mixing took place.

This construction process was still being used by Council in 2010.

During the construction and sealing program it was not uncommon for staff to work 14 to 16-hour days.

Current Construction Methods

When Council began using stabilising techniques at the airport in 2016 it was decided to trial cement and cement/lime stabilisation to sections of gravel road, new construction and some reconstruction roads on the Island.

It was discovered that this construction method was much quicker and more environmentally friendly than the old method. Whilst the old method could take up to 10 loads of water to reach optimum moisture content because of the controlled environment within the stabiliser machine this could be reduced to 2 or 3 loads. The addition of lime (if required to minimise clay content) and cement gives a more dense and stronger pavement capable of taking heavier and more constant loads. In the case of reconstruction of sealed roads, the wearing course no longer needs to be removed as this is pulverised and mixed in with the base course adding extra strength.

To reconstruct the same 400 metre section of road under this method now would take under 6 hours compared to the old method of 14 – 16 hours.

Outcome

A section of Coast Road was constructed using the current construction method and insitu material with 3% cement to a depth of 100 mm.

The Pitt & Sherry deflector survey shows that under current traffic conditions that 0% is expected to fail in the next 17 years for this section of road. The Pitt and Sherry Report explains that 36 % of Palana and Memana Road under the same traffic conditions are expected to have failures in the next 10 years.

Under our future Capital Roads program, we have allowed for reconstruction at a depth of 150 mm (which is 50% greater than the section of Coast Road trial) in order to produce a stronger pavement.

The Roads Program should enable the majority of the expected failures of Palana & Memana Roads to be reconstructed in the next 5 years and then we can repair sections of Lackrana Road as well. It will be then that we should start to see an improvement in our road network, having repaired the weakest sections. This is based on the assumptions in the Pitt and Sherry report of heavy vehicle usage and frequency.

Changes to the heavy vehicle capacities and increases in traffic frequencies will affect these probabilities.”

Conclusion

In review of the report from Brian Barnewall and my own experience of the road networks across Australia in comparison to Flinders Island I strongly believe that we provide a very good standard of roads for such a small municipality.

In answer to the question asked, as per the above report from Brian Barnewall, the roads are inherited, and future maintenance has employed the best technologies and efficiencies that Council can afford. We are aiming to improve the specification of the road network to meet current demands however this will only be achieved over time.

How do our roads stack up in comparison to other regional municipalities in Australia? To answer this, I speak from experience having lived in Northern New South Wales and Queensland for over a decade. I have travelled significantly on the mainland covering the entire length of the east coast from Melbourne through to the northern most tip of Cape York. In comparison to the regional areas of these areas, Flinders Island roads are of a high standard.

The Byron Shire where I spent most of my time is a wealthy regional Shire, but its road network was atrocious, with potholes size of craters! On the surface it is easy to dismiss the Councils for neglecting their road network, however, when one takes into account other factors such as the upgrading of the main highway between Gold Coast and Byron (which took four years to complete, and was completed at the end of

2017), which facilitated faster, more efficient travel and thus increased the number of vehicles within the Byron Shire, accompanied with the copious rainfall in that region (which makes it very difficult to repair the roads), then one can see that the Byron Council had to cope with difficult weather conditions and excessive increasing visiting traffic. These combinations of the last eight years saw major deterioration in their road network.

If anyone has perhaps taken the journey from Ballina through to Sydney which is a major Pacific highway on the east coast of Australia, and travelled through the regional areas along this stretch, the road conditions are severely below standard compared to Flinders Island roads. It is easy to cast dispersion on the Federal Government for not maintaining the major highway, however, once again the deterioration of such a road is due to the heavy truck travel along this highway which links Queensland and New South Wales. The deterioration of these roads was due in part to the decline in rail freight between the two states, opting to use freight trucks instead.

My point here is that to determine whether Flinders Council is maintaining its roads to a sufficient quality and specification for heavy vehicles, there are several factors to consider, these being: the makeup of the roads, the capacity and weight of the trucks travelling on the road, the frequency of these vehicles on the road and how these have changed over time.

We can as a Council can employ engineers to make assumptions on our road network and provide advice as to the best methods to use to maintain them in the most efficient manner, but at the end of the day we are restricted by funds, we have no control over the increase or decrease in traffic on our roads, have no control over the weather and therefore do the best we can.

Finally, in closing I take the opportunity to commend the Flinders Island road makers of the past in laying a very good network of roads and thank our current Council staff for doing their very best to upkeep and improve the standard of our roads, to meet the ever changing demands.

- 2. Question:**
Could the budget forum slide used in the presentation to explain the variation in rates

across the various property types be posted on the Facebook Community Noticeboard?

Response:

It is not Flinders Council practice to upload important isolated information onto the Facebook Community Noticeboard. Any information in relation to Budgets, Financial Reports, Annual Reports can be found on our website www.flinders.tas.gov.au. The slide used for the Budget Forum has been uploaded for public access on the website.

- 3. Question:**
Are Council sitting on plant or equipment that they are not utilising? For example, the Green Waste Mulcher.

Response:

In respect of the Green Waste Mulcher, the asset has not been utilised at the tip as the green waste is too contaminated with wire and other metal objects. Under our recycling program the aim is to have greater supervision over green waste dumping which will allow mulching to occur.

We will be having a review in the upcoming year of any redundant plant that Council no longer requires and opt for sale or disposal where required.

- 4. Question:**
Overhanging trees: concern that there are a number of limbs overhanging the road and when large trucks are carting livestock, they need to move to the middle of the road to avoid hanging branches which becomes a safety hazard.

Response:

Council is aware the overhang of trees is a safety hazard. The maximum height of slashing by Council is set at 5.6 meters as per the standard of the Department of State Growth roads throughout Tasmania.

Council currently hires a contractor to vertically slash the road verges to improve sight distances for safety and stop vegetation encroaching on to the road verge.

The contractor's machine can slash to a height of 5.6 meters if it can get close to the vegetation and is on level ground (no drains).

We will seek to identify areas that do not comply with the 5.6 meter standard and address these in the upcoming financial year.

5. Question:

Why is the Airport Runway Upgrade being carried out in February during the peak tourism period?

Response:

February is the optimal time weather wise for the works to be carried out, having the least amount of predicted rainfall and longer daylight hours. We have consulted with Malcolm Sharp and the RPT Airline and we are aiming to ensure that the airport will be open daily for a period of time (to be negotiated with the winning tenderer) while also ensuring adherence to safety regulations and keeping within budget constraints.

Heidi Marshall
Acting General Manager

SPRING HOLIDAY PROGRAM IS HERE!

Lots of activities for the kids to enjoy – see flyer in this edition of the Island News. Please text 0437 987 863 to book your place or email sammi.gowthorp@flinders.tas.gov.au

Also a call out for mums, dads, and carers who can spare a few hours during the program to participate alongside the children to ensure that their day is both safe and lots of fun!

WE'RE UPDATING THE LOCAL BUSINESS DIRECTORY ON THE COUNCIL WEBSITE

If you'd like to be included or update your existing details - please send us through an email at office@flinders.tas.gov.au and we'll get right to it!

<http://www.flinders.tas.gov.au/furneaux-business-directory>

CHANGE TO COUNCIL MEETING DATE

Please note that the Flinders Council Ordinary Council Meeting scheduled for Tuesday 22 October 2019 at 9.30am has been **changed to Thursday 24 October 2019 at 9.30am.**

Heidi Marshall | **A/General Manager**