

MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL & COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE OF UPPER HUNTER SHIRE COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 9 AUGUST 2022 IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS COMMENCING AT 10.37AM

PRESENT:

Cr Lee Watts (Chair), Cr Ron Campbell and Cr Allison McPhee.

APOLOGIES:

Nil

Noted: Cr Flaherty has a pending request for leave of absence.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Cr Maurice Collison (Mayor), Mr Greg McDonald (General Manager), Mr Mathew Pringle (Director Planning & Infrastructure Services), Mr Kristian Enevoldson (Director Corporate Services) and Mrs Lisa Betts (Administration Officer).

PREVIOUS MINUTES:

RESOLVED that the Committee adopt the minutes from the previous Environmental & Community Services Committee meeting held on 14 June 2022 .

MOVED: A MCPHEE

SECONDED: R CAMPBELL

CARRIED

DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST:

Nil

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Nil

AGENDA ITEMS:

ECSC.08.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES - PROJECTS UPDATE

Cr Campbell expressed concern in relation to various waste issues experienced by the Merriwa community. This included the evaluation of routine waste collection for commercial premises as well as accrual & onsite storage of waste for extensive periods of time.

The Director Planning Infrastructure Services advised that Council has been discussing various solutions with local businesses. Given the volume of waste generated, a private contract for skip bin collection may be suitable or there is an option to obtain additional bins which would be collected fortnightly. Those utilising weekly collection in the past were not paying for the service so it was not viable to continue to offer this additional service at a cost to Council.

Cr Campbell enquired about weekly collection if owners were willing to pay for the service. The Director confirmed that he had discussed this option with the contactor however it is unlikely to be viable.

The General Manager asked if a weekly collection could be considered for cardboard alone as the waste contractor is already in the township on a weekly basis. The Director noted that it could be considered however he believed that the quantity of cardboard generated by some businesses would exceed the capacity of standard recycling bins.

A verbal update was then provided in relation to the Land Use Strategy. Correspondence from Ms Karen Fulljames was distributed to the Committee. Clarification was sought regarding the status of the investigation areas. The Director confirmed that the priority investigation areas have been endorsed by the Department of Planning and Environment but the preliminary investigation areas have not. He also noted Ms Fulljames' concerns regarding the protection of agricultural land throughout the shire, particularly when rezoning proposals are being considered.

Cr Campbell asked if the review of the Land Use Strategy would address the shortage of vacant residential land. The Director advised that it would.

The Committee proceeded to discuss the proposed waste transfer stations.

Cr Campbell asked if Council has any input into the design of the transfer stations as concern has been raised about wind-blown litter. The Director confirmed that the sites will be kept clean and tidy, the facilities will be supervised and measures will be in place to stop wind-blown litter. Animal carcasses will not be accepted and customers will have the option to utilise a drop-off bay.

In response to a query from Cr Collison, the Director confirmed that the skip bins at the transfer stations would be covered.

The General Manager advised that he had conducted a site inspection of the proposed Merriwa Transfer Station site on Cullingral Road and noted that it is fully fenced and surrounded on three sides by vegetation which would offer some protection from wind. He emphasised that the new facility will not be an open landfill.

THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 10.57AM.

