



DIRECTOR SHIRE SERVICES REPORT

14 June 2005

DSS7 NSW ROAD CLASSIFICATION REVIEW
FILE: 41 NJT

SUMMARY:

Reporting on the Interim Report of the NSW Road Classification Review Panel and its implication on Council's Regional Road Network.



In May 2004 both Council and the RTA were invited to make submissions to the Road Classification Review Panel to justify existing regional roads as well as proposing any new roads to be classified as Regional Roads.

Council made a submission in August 2004 proposing that the five existing Regional Roads remain as Regional Roads.

<u>Road No</u>	<u>Road Name</u>	<u>Sealed Length</u>	<u>Unsealed length</u>
MR75	Armidale Road	60.02	13.15
MR198	South West Rocks Road	36.16	
MR5560	Smithtown Road	4.00	
MR7737	Crescent Head Rd	18.37	
MR7740	Stuarts Point Road	<u>10.28</u>	
	TOTAL	<u>128.83</u>	<u>13.15</u>

An additional three other roads were submitted for inclusion as Regional roads.

- Local Road 121 – Plummers Lane
- Local Road 141 – Maria River Road
- Local Road 64 – Hickeys Creek Road, Billybyang Road, Sundowner Road, Taylors Arm Road.

Council currently receives a contribution from the RTA to maintain and improve Regional Roads in the form of a Block Grant. The amount of the Block Grant is determined by a formula, which uses

road length, traffic volumes and bridge length as factors. Council's current funding allocation under the program is \$1,116,000.

The Interim Report proposes that, of the 3 additional roads submitted, only Plummers Lane will be supported.

Of the 5 existing Regional Roads, the section of Armidale Road west of Bellbrook and South West Rocks Road from Gladstone to Plummers Lane would revert to Local Road status.

This will have a significant impact on the allocation of funds under the Block Grant. It is estimated that there would be a reduction of approximately \$200,000 annually in grant funds. These roads will need to be funded from within Council's existing rural road funding allocations.

An extract from the Interim Report states:

"The Panel has taken a rather firm approach in arriving at its initial assessment. Proposals, particularly those seeking to raise the classification of a road, need to have demonstrated compelling arguments that the road meets the classification criteria in order to convince the Panel to propose agreement.

The Panel is aware that the current classification of many roads dates back to the 1920s at a time when motor traffic was very limited and there was an extensive network of low speed, low standard roads. With the upgrading of many arterial roads and despite past classification reviews, there remains some classified roads, particularly through difficult country, which may have been significant in the past but today remain as relatively low standard, low usage roads. Apart from some tourists, local ratepayers, and occasionally logging traffic, such roads do not fit the criteria for State or Regional Roads in the highly motorised economy now in existence.

The Panel acknowledges that there will never be enough funding, as called for by many stakeholders, to improve the vast length of roads in NSW. The Panel took the view that, given the limited funds available, a hierarchical network should be reinforced to encourage traffic to use the higher order network. Accordingly, where council's main argument supporting reclassification was that a road provided a short cut or an alternative route, the proposal has been rejected on the basis that the State needs to focus on the major network and encourage its maximum use rather than divert funds onto short cuts and low volume alternative routes. It is particularly necessary to encourage freight vehicles to use the arterial network in order to minimise road damage and safety impacts on other roads."

The panel has requested Council's consideration of their initial position and has invited a formal response by 30 June 2005.

Armidale Dumaresq Council has requested Kempsey Shire Council's support for the retention of MR75 as a Regional Road.

It is recommended that Council support Armidale Dumaresq Council in retaining the full length of Armidale Road as a Regional Road, due to the increased financial burden that will be placed on Council, the importance of a direct link between the regional centres of Kempsey and Armidale and the potential of this route as upgrading occurs.

It is also recommended that Council seek to retain the total length of South West Rocks Road, due to the increased financial burden, as well as its regional importance as a direct southern link to Kempsey.

REPORT IMPLICATIONS

▪ Environmental Implications

There are no environmental implications from the following recommendation.

▪ Social Implications

There are no social implications from the following recommendation.

▪ Economic (Financial) Implications

Of the proposal in the interim report are adopted an additional amount of approximately \$200,000 will need to be funded from Council funds for maintenance of those sections of road that were formally regional roads.

▪ Policy or Statutory Implications

There are no policy or statutory implications from the following recommendation.

▪ Director's Review

Council relies heavily on the Block Grant to supplement its Road Funding and cannot afford any reduction. Council is urged to support the recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Road Classification Review Panel be advised that Kempsey Shire Council support the retention of the full length of MR75 (Armidale Rd) and MR198 (South West Rocks Rd) as Regional Roads.

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DIRECTOR SHIRE SERVICES
K J Finnie