



## DIRECTOR SHIRE SERVICES REPORT

14 June 2005

**DSS9 PILOT STATION, SOUTH WEST ROCKS  
FILE: LA5587 JMC**

### SUMMARY:

Reporting on the Pilot Station at South West Rocks.



### Background:

The Pilot Station was built in 1902 as permanent accommodation for the Pilot who was responsible for guiding shipping into and out of the then new entrance to the Macleay River.

The property is an "item of environmental heritage" (heritage item) under Kempsey Local Environmental Plan 1987.

In 1997 Council entered into a Lease Agreement under the Crown Lands Act, with the Department Land and Water Conservation for a period of ten (10) years for the Pilot Station property (site and buildings) for the specific purpose of "Community Purposes". This lease expires on 19 October 2007.

Council called for Expressions of Interest and the Kempsey Adult Education, South West Rocks Senior Citizens Association and later the South West Rocks Neighbourhood Centre became tenants of this building.

In 2000 Macleay Valley Community Education Adult Education Group entered into an Agreement to become a Centrelink Agency.

### Current:

The building has urgent maintenance and safety issues, with the following repairs being identified: -

- Replace terracotta roof tiles.
- Adjust or replace piers to level up floor.
- Full internal/external repaint.

- Replace gutters and down pipes.
- Replace back verandah.
- Electrical rewire.
- Modifications to return front/side verandah to original.
- Reconstruct timber tank stand.

Estimates for the work total \$99,000.

Letters were forwarded on 4 May 2005 to Adult Education (including the Centrelink Agency) and the Neighbourhood Centre stating that the leases would not be renewed due to maintenance and OH&S issues at this building.

Council's Community Services has liaised with the leaseholders to help them access other accommodation.

Council's Community Projects Officer is seeking grant funding to maintain and restore this heritage building.

The Mayor met with the Hon Tony Kelly, MLC, Minister for Rural Affairs, Minister for Local Government, Minister Emergency Services, and Minister for Natural Resources (Lands) last year and outlined Council's concerns over large maintenance items of the SWR Heritage Precinct (including the Boatman's Cottage). The response was that maintenance was the responsibility of Council during the time of the Lease.

## **REPORT IMPLICATIONS:**

- ***Environmental***

***The Maritime Heritage precinct is an important area of South West Rocks and warrants preserving.***

- ***Social***

***The user groups have been unable to find alternative accommodation, highlighting that there is a lack of suitable accommodation for community based organisations and groups in the area. This may impinge on available services and assistance for the South West Rocks community, however the safety of the building and occupants is paramount.***

- ***Economic (Financial)***

***Loss of rental on this building whilst Council still pays lease agreement fees, rates and maintains lawn.***

- ***Policy or Statutory***

***There are no policy or statutory implications from this report.***

- *Director's Review*

*For Council to derive any benefit from investment in these buildings a longer lease term would be required.*

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. That a further lease of ten (10) years for the Pilot Station property with the Department of Lands be sought.
2. If granted the continuation of the lease of a further 10 years, that the immediate replacement of the roof tiles be carried out from Budget 2005/06 monies allocated to the SWR Heritage Precinct.
3. That a meeting be held with interested parties for possible future use of the Pilot Station property. E.g. Adult Education, Neighbourhood Centre, Senior Citizens Association, Arts and Craft Association, Historical Society, Visitor Information Centre and any other interested community organisations.
4. That grant funding to carry out restoration works be sought continually.

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**DIRECTOR SHIRE SERVICES**  
K J Finnie