



## DIRECTOR SHIRE SERVICES REPORT

14th March 2006

<b>DSS2</b>	<b>REGIONAL ROADS TIMBER BRIDGE PROGRAM</b>
<b>FILE: 61</b>	<b>NJT {Folio No. *}</b>

### SUMMARY:

Reporting on the Regional Roads Timber Bridge Program.



Council received advice on 7th July 2003, from the RTA regarding funding of Regional Road Timber Bridge Program over 7 years commencing in 2004 / 05 [Appendix A](#).

In April 2004, after a NSW State mini-budget, Council was advised that the commencement of the Regional Roads Timber Bridge Program would be deferred for 2 years to 2006.

On 29th September 2005, in a Press Release re Auslink Funding, the NSW Minister for Roads advised:

"New Programs – like extra money for replacing country timber bridges – cannot be funded."

No other correspondence or advice re the program has been received from the Minister for Roads or the RTA.

On 9th February 2006, Council contacted the RTA to finalise proposals under the upcoming program. Council was then advised that the program was "dead". When questioned whether advice was forthcoming, Council was advised to enquire in writing and that a written response would be forthcoming. A letter has been sent to the RTA to confirm the verbal advice.

The matter of the axing of the program was raised by Mayor Janet Hayes at the A Division Conference of the Shires Association at Casino on 15 February 2006.

This lack of funding will have a significant effect on the ability of Council to fund the suitable replacement of these timber bridges on

Regional Roads. The preliminary estimate to replace 7 timber bridges is approximately \$4.5mil.

It is proposed to carry out a detailed assessment of the condition, timing and suitable replacement of each bridge, and then report the findings for Council determination. Due to the size of the structures and detailed investigation required, this process may take considerable time to complete. It is expected that the initial findings on the state of the bridges will dictate the timing of detailed further investigations for budgetary considerations.

The replacement of the Woolshed Gully Bridge on Armidale Road has been programmed to be carried out in 2006 / 07. Recent investigations carried out on the bridge revealed significant damage requiring immediate attention.

Some works will be carried out to make the bridge safe in the short-term. It is recommended that Council continue to replace this bridge in 2006 / 07 out of loan funds and Block grant funds.

#### **REPORT IMPLICATIONS:**

- ***Environmental***

***There are no environmental implications from the following recommendation.***

- ***Social***

***There are no social implications from the following recommendation.***

- ***Economic (Financial)***

***The financial implication from the removal of the Regional Road Timber Bridge Program is that Council may be required to find an additional \$2.25mil to replace and upgrade 7 timber bridges.***

- ***Policy or Statutory***

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

- ***Acting Director's Review***

***This is an extremely disappointing situation and one which places further emphasis on Council's ability to fund its bridge works.***

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

1. That Council expresses its concern to the Minister for Roads regarding the axing of the Regional Roads Timber Bridge Program.
2. That Woolshed Gully Bridge on Armidale Road be replaced in 2006 / 07.
3. That detailed assessments be carried out on the remainder of the Regional Road Timber Bridges, regarding their condition and future replacement, for consideration for inclusion in Council's 10 year Long-Term Budget.

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**G R Whelan**  
**Acting DIRECTOR SHIRE SERVICES**