



KEMPSEY
Shire Council

DIRECTOR CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES REPORT

11th September 2007

DCCS8	COMMUNITY BUS SERVICE
FILE: 465 CC: 558	MLB {Folio No. *}

SUMMARY:

Reporting on the current status of the Community Bus Service.

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DESCRIPTION:

At Council's ordinary meeting of the 13th March 2007, Council resolved that the Kempsey Assistance Patrol service would cease operations as of Friday, 23rd March 2007.

The patrol service utilised (2) Council buses at night and during the day the buses are utilised by various community groups on a fee for service basis (\$6,438 in 2006 / 07).

At Council's meeting of the 12th June 2007, Council considered a further report regarding the ownership of the buses. Advice received indicated that the ownership of the two (2) buses was realised through funding secured from the NSW Department of Community Services (DoCS) under the Community Solutions program. Notification received from the department states:

"It is the intention of [the] Communities Division that assets purchased to assist with the delivery of Community Solutions projects would remain within the community.

To that end the Division supports the continued use of the buses for the Kempsey Assistance Patrol (KAP) project and the Community Bus Services. However, if this is no longer a viable option, we recommend that Council first seeks to transfer the buses to non-government organisations for use either by a similar project or for continued community use. If this action is also not viable we recommend that you refer to Council's policy on disposal of assets."

At the 12th June 2007 meeting Council resolved:

"That this matter be deferred until further information is obtained on the future of the Kempsey Assistance Patrol Service."

In March 2007, the NSW Attorney General's Department advertised a new tender for the operation of Aboriginal Community Patrols within the Kempsey Shire. The Kempsey Local Aboriginal Lands Council was successful in obtaining the tender for the operation of the Kempsey Assistance Patrol.

Advice received from the NSW Attorney General's Department notes that:

"the department has finalised negotiations with the Kempsey Local Aboriginal Land Council and the patrol is likely to commence operation during September 2007." The Department is also seeking *"to have one of [the buses] transferred to the Kempsey Local Aboriginal Land Council to support the ongoing operation of the Kempsey Assistance Patrol."*

If Council is not in a position to transfer the ownership of one of the community buses to the Kempsey Local Aboriginal Lands Council this will result in the delay of the program and its operations until the end of the year.

Options

Council has the following options to consider:

1. Transfer the ownership of one of the buses to the Kempsey Local Aboriginal Lands Council for the resumption of the Kempsey Assistance Patrol service and seek expressions of interest from suitable community groups for the remaining bus.
2. Continue the current arrangements of Council being the owner of the assets with internal resources used in providing the service to community groups.
3. Seek expressions of interest for both buses from interested community groups.

REPORT IMPLICATIONS:

- ***Environmental***

Nil

- ***Social***

The Kempsey Assistance Patrol service provided a transport service to remove young people from the streets of Kempsey to a safe place.

The NSW Attorney Generals Department continues to support this outcome and has announced grants up to \$65,000 per / annum to run the patrol service.

As part of the sustainability of the buses Council has hired them out during to day to children and youth based organisations as an alternative transport option. This is a much needed service within the community however, it is not a core business of Council, and requires a number of resources to maintain, including administration, community services and fleet in the management of the assets.

- *Economic (Financial)*

Council internal resources will no longer be involved in the management of these services.

Buses are currently hired on a cost recovery basis no financial benefits to Council are sought.

- *Policy or Statutory*

Nil

Director's Review

The net operating costs (excl. Depreciation) of the buses have been covered by the hire charges. Transfer of the buses is supported. If Council were to retain them the eventual replacement thereof could pose a financial impost on Council.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the ownership of one (1) community bus be transferred to the Kempsey Local Aboriginal Lands Council to facilitate the recommencement of the Kempsey Assistance Patrol.
2. That the Kempsey Local Aboriginal Lands Council accepts the bus in its current condition and has no recourse on Council to affect any repairs to the bus and the Land Council assumes responsibility for the maintenance and administration of the vehicle.
3. That expressions of interest be sought for a suitable community based organisation to take over the responsibility of the remaining Community Bus incorporating current operational arrangements of services for the community.

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G B Snape

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