



KEMPSEY
Shire Council

DIRECTOR SHIRE SERVICES REPORT

11th September 2007

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| DSS4 | TIMBER BRIDGES PARTNERSHIP |
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SUMMARY:

Reporting on the Timber Bridges Partnership

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DESCRIPTION:

Correspondence has been received from the RTA advising that Council's four timber bridges on the Regional Road network have been approved in the Timber Bridges Partnership. The four bridges approved are:

- MR 75 – Devils Nook Creek Bridge
- MR 75 – Mungay Creek Bridge
- MR 75 – Nulla Nulla Creek Bridge
- MR 198 – Spencers Creek Bridge (Perrets Bridge).

The program provides for the replacement of timber bridges to concrete bridges including the upgrading from single lane to two lane bridges. Funding for the upgrading is provided on a 50:50 basis over a two year period being 2007 / 2008 and 2008 / 2009.

Council considered a report at its meeting on 13th February 2007 regarding the NSW State Government's \$60 million Timber Bridges Partnership and resolved:

"That Council submit an application for funding under the Timber Bridge Partnership for the replacement and upgrading of the Mungay Creek Bridge on Armidale Road."

Further advice was received from the RTA, prior to the closing date of the scheme requesting Council to lodge applications for the replacement of all the timber bridges on Regional Roads. In addition to Mungay Creek Bridge, applications were forwarded to the RTA for Devils Nook Creek Bridge and Nulla Nulla Creek Bridge on Armidale Road and Perrets Bridge over Spencers Creek, Jerseyville, on South West Rocks Road.

Project applications were submitted for Council's four remaining timber bridges in the total estimated amount of \$4,530,000 with the RTA and Council's share estimated at \$2,245,000 and \$2,285,000 respectively. Note that Council's share is slightly higher than the RTA as the RTA will only fund 50% of the first \$200,000 of approach roadworks and the Mungay Creek Bridge approach works are estimated at \$240,000.

It should be noted that the costs referred to above and submitted to the RTA are at this time preliminary estimates only. Actual costs will not be known until detailed designs have been completed and tenders received. A further report will be presented to council at that time.

Council's current program as outlined in the 10 year long-term budget and the Transportation Infrastructure Delivery Plan identifies that the above four bridges are to be replaced over a nine (9) year timeframe.

Should Council accept this grant in its entirety, funding for these projects would need to be brought forward from the identified period of nine (9) years to two years (2007 / 08 and 2008 / 2009).

During the last two financial years, inspections have identified further deterioration of the Regional Road timber bridges, especially Woolshed Gully Bridge and Mungay Creek Bridge. The replacement of Woolshed Gully Bridge was brought forward in last year's Works Program due to failures in the bridge structure.

As reported to the August 2007 meeting of Council, urgent structural repairs were required to be carried out on Mungay Creek Bridge on Armidale Road (MR75), as a result of a routine inspection that identified that three girders had split.

These two bridges have had serious failures in their sub-structure causing safety concerns to vehicles and occupants travelling across them. It is imperative that Council replace these timber bridge structures as soon as practicable due to possible high risk failures and the additional funding that may be required to carry out emergency repairs.

The inclusion of these four timber bridges in the Timber Bridges Partnership represents a significant windfall for this Council. Council was committed to replacing these bridges at full cost to Council. The partnership provides an opportunity to secure funding for 50% of the cost of replacement of these bridges and to bring forward their replacement.

The majority of Council's share of the funding is proposed to be provided from loans with additional funding from Regional Road Block Grant and Bridge Reserve. Council could be seen to be taking a pro-active approach in providing new two-lane concrete bridges and thereby removing the risk associated with the existing single lane timber bridges that are nearing 70 years of age.

It is recommended that Council enter into the partnership to reconstruct the four remaining timber bridges on its Regional Roads. It is anticipated that planning, design and construction of these structures will be completed within the allotted timeframe (June 2009) subject to the availability of suitable consultants and contractors. Because of the current workload for Council staff in replacing/upgrading Council's bridges and the short time frame of the program, it is proposed to call tenders for the design and construction of the four bridges.

REPORT IMPLICATIONS:

- ***Environmental***

A Review of Environmental Factors will be carried as part of the design process.

- *Social*

Council has an ongoing responsibility to ensure the safety of the public.

- *Economic (Financial)*

The entering into the partnership to be completed within the two years would require Council to bring forward the Regional Road Timber Bridge Replacement from nine (9) years to two (2) years.

Council's current budget for timber bridge replacement on Regional Roads provides the following amounts:

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| <i>2007 / 08</i> | <i>\$500,000</i> | <i>(\$120,000 Block Grant; \$380,000 loans)</i> |
| <i>2008 / 09</i> | <i>\$800,000</i> | <i>(\$120,000 Block Grant; \$680,000 loans)</i> |

Loans in the additional estimated amount of \$1,000,000 would need to be raised during the 2007 / 09 period. However, loans currently proposed from 2009 / 2016 in the amount of \$2,430,000 would not be required. Note that the actual amount of additional loans that will be required will not be known until after detailed designs have been completed and tenders received.

- *Policy or Statutory*

Council is required by Section 55 of Local Government Act to invite tenders before entering into a contract involving an estimated expenditure of more than \$150,000.

Section 166 of the Regulations requires Council to decide whether to call tenders by the open tendering method or the selective tendering method.

- *Director's Review*

The inclusion of Council's remaining four timber bridges on regional roads in the Timber Bridge Partnership provides a unique opportunity for Council to receive funding for 50% of the cost of replacing and upgrading these bridges and to bring forward their replacement. Council is urged to support the recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1** That Council enter into the Timber Bridge Partnership with the RTA for the replacement of four timber bridges on Council's Regional Road network.
- 2** That the additional funds required to meet Council's share of funding be provided from loans.
- 3** That tenders be called by the open tendering method for the design and construction of the new bridges.

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A P Vermeulen
DIRECTOR SHIRE SERVICES