

DE7

REGIONAL ROAD TIMBER BRIDGE PROGRAM

FILE: B6-2 APV COPY: APC

{Folio No. 270973}

SUMMARY:

Reporting on the Regional Roads Timber Bridge Program for 2004/05 to 2010/11.



At the Council meeting on 14th October 2003, Council considered a report on the Regional Road Timber Bridge Program and resolved:

- "1. That representations be made to the Minister for Roads to negotiate the subsidy under the Regional Roads Timber Bridge Replacement Program with a view to the replacement of bridges to the standard of the current Bridge Code of Australia.*
- 2. That the Member for Oxley, Mr Andrew Stoner, MP, be advised."*

Council has recently received advice from Tony Stewart, MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Roads advising that Council may replace single lane bridges with two lane bridges *"providing Engineering design standards conform with current Austroads Standards and that the construction of a two lane bridge reflects road function and usage."* Further Council is free to utilise funding from its Block Grant allocation.

A copy of the Administration Guidelines for the program has recently been received from the RTA.

For each of the five timber bridges on Council's Regional Roads, because of the traffic volumes, the 1992 Austroads Bridge Design code requires the bridges to be designed as two lane bridges.

Council has been asked by the RTA to submit details of its proposals for funding under the Regional Roads Timber Bridge Program, for 2004/05 to 2010/11, by 1st March 2004.

More detailed pre-design preliminary estimates have been completed and submitted to the RTA for approval. The preliminary estimates have made provision for design costs, construction of bridge, sidetrack where necessary, approach roadworks and demolition of existing structures.

It is estimated that the cost of replacement of the 5 timber bridges on Regional Roads in Kempsey Shire, including approach roadworks, is \$4.17M. With the RTA contribution of 50% of the total cost of the replacement of the bridges, Council will need to find its share, ie. \$2.085M, over the 7 years of the program. No provision has been made in the forward estimates for such funding and Council's funding sources are limited. It would seem unwise to utilise more than, say, \$120,000 per annum from the Block Grant for this program due to the consequent reductions on the roadworks program. Council is providing a reserve fund for Bridge Construction but this is currently earmarked for Council's Bridge Construction program and any diversion of funds will delay works on Council owned bridges. Some \$180,000 per year

would need to be sourced from either Loan Funds, Revenue or Working Funds. Loans funds would seem most affordable.

The RTA has sought a funding profile under the program, and Council has not committed any funds at this stage. Below is a copy of the likely funding profile over the 7 year life of the program:

| Bridge | Estimate | Year | Funding Proposed |
|----------------|--------------------|-------|------------------|
| Woolshed Gully | \$160,000 | 04/05 | \$160,000 |
| Nulla Nulla Ck | \$915,000 | 04/05 | \$390,000 |
| | | 05/06 | \$525,000 |
| Perrets Bridge | \$1,000,000 | 05/06 | \$ 40,000 |
| | | 06/07 | \$580,000 |
| | | 07/08 | \$380,000 |
| Mungay Ck | \$815,000 | 07/08 | \$215,000 |
| | | 08/09 | \$600,000 |
| Devils Nook Ck | \$ 1,280,000 | 08/09 | \$ 10,000 |
| | | 09/10 | \$625,000 |
| | | 10/11 | \$645,000 |
| TOTAL | \$4,170,000 | | |

This program has been forwarded by the RTA.

The timber bridges are approximately 70 years old. The estimated life of a timber bridge is 50 years. Significant funds are currently being spent on these bridges (\$105,000 for Devils Nook Bridge in 02/03, \$40, 000 for Mungay Creek Bridge in 00/01). All the bridges are single lane and, over the next few years, will require a significant injection of funds to maintain their serviceability.

It is considered that Council should accept this unprecedented opportunity to obtain 50% funding to replace and widen these bridges. Even without this funding Council would be required to provide a significant injection of funding into the maintenance and upgrading/replacement of these bridges.

Director's comment:

Council needs to be aware of the requirement to set aside funding over the next 7 years as its contribution to this program and is urged to support the recommendation.

Implications:

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

The financial implications from the following recommendation, is that \$120,000pa be set aside from the Regional Road Block Grant, and that provision of \$180,000pa be made in future budgets to fund the balance of Council's contribution.

Director Engineering Recommendation:

- 1. That the proposed Regional Road Timber Bridge Programme be endorsed.**
- 2. That \$120,000pa be set aside out of future Regional Road Block Grant funding, and that provision of \$180,000pa be made in future budgets to fund the balance of Council's contribution to the Regional Road Timber Bridge Program.**