



BUSINESS PAPER

ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL

To be held on

Wednesday, 22 May 2019
4pm

at

Guyra Council Chambers

Members

Councillor Simon Murray (Mayor)
Councillor Dorothy Robinson (Deputy Mayor)
Councillor Peter Bailey
Councillor Jon Galletly
Councillor Diane Gray
Councillor Libby Martin
Councillor Andrew Murat
Councillor Debra O'Brien
Councillor Margaret O'Connor
Councillor Ian Tiley
Councillor Bradley Widders

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

INDEX

7	Mayoral Minute	
	7.1 FOR INFORMATION - The Drought.....	3
8	Notices of Motion	
	8.1 FOR DECISION: Community Meetings for Draft 2019/20 Budget.....	6
	8.2 FOR DECISION: Grant projects in 2019/20 Operational Plan and Budget	7
	8.3 FOR DECISION: Public Exhibition of Civic Prayer (Code of Meeting Practice)	9
	8.4 FOR DECISION: Dates for Public Submissions.....	10
	8.5 FOR DECISION: Public Meeting: Budget Proposals.....	11
18	Questions on Notice	
	18.1 Questions on Notice - Cr Robinson and Cr O'Connor.....	12

Item: 7.1
Title: FOR INFORMATION - The Drought
Author: Simon Murray, Mayor
Attachments: Nil

Ref: AINT/2019/11189
Container: ARC19/3212

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Mayoral Minute on the drought be noted.

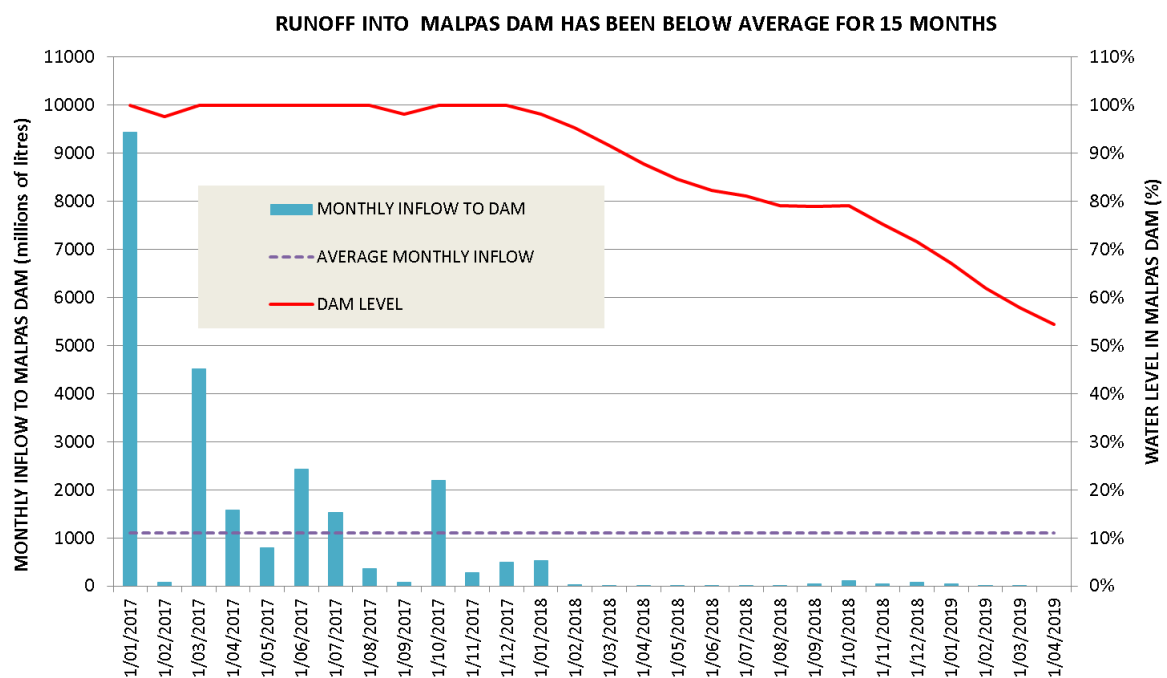
THE DROUGHT

The region is experiencing the worst drought in 40 years.

Rainfall in the last 12 months has been 35% below the long term average.

More importantly the flow in the Gara River is 95% below average with nil runoff since the end of January. Dam levels are falling as a consequence.

The Bureau of Meteorology's forecast is not good. There is a 100% chance for 25mm rain fall in the next three months which is not expected to generate any inflow for Guyra or Armidale water dams.



Water level in Malpas Dam is down to 52% which is the lowest it has been since the 1980 drought when levels were under 40%.

With increasing levels of water restrictions, Malpas Dam has roughly 12-18 months of supply left in the absence of runoff. Further water balance modelling is being undertaken to determine when the dam will get to critically low water levels.

In Guyra the water situation is extremely serious.

Guyra's larger "Top" Dam is now empty save for the remaining 5% of emergency storage and the smaller "Bottom" Dam is now the only water available to the town. Overall the dams are below 30% of capacity which is the lowest ever recorded.

Council is undertaking further water quality testing on the Guyra dams as some of the remaining water may be too dirty to treat.

Without further reduction in water consumption Guyra will be entirely out of water by the end of July, possibly earlier depending on both water consumption and water quality.

Due to the very small size of the Guyra dams the water levels have fallen quickly which has precipitated a rapid advance into the higher level water restrictions.

The Malpas Dam/Guyra Pipeline

The Malpas Dam/Guyra Pipeline project is scheduled for completion at the end of 2019.

However, the pipeline component of the project is several months ahead of schedule and currently expected to be commissioned in mid-August. Council is working with the pipeline contractors to explore avenues to bring forward the commissioning date.

Council has organised an alternate power supply to temporarily enable the operation of the pipeline following its commissioning in August.

To stretch out what water is left in the Guyra Dam until the pipeline can be commissioned, Level 5 water restrictions will be imposed on the Guyra in the coming weeks.

Water carting from Armidale to Guyra is also expected to be required for a period before the new Malpas-Guyra pipeline is operational.

Council is applying to the NSW Government for funding to undertake this water carting and work on the logistics of water carting is advanced.

Tingha's water supply is unaffected as the supply is through Inverell Shire Council and sourced from Copeton Dam which is in a different catchment.

Status

Level 4 restrictions commenced on Monday 20 May 2019 for both Guyra and Armidale. Under Level 4 all outdoor residential water use is banned.

Water supplies and the water restrictions levels are being monitored on a daily basis. Guyra is expected to transition to Level 5 within the next 4 weeks and return to Level 4 when the pipeline is operational.

What is Council doing?

Council is considering exemptions applications on an individual basis in an endeavor to mitigate the impact on business as well as conserve remaining water supplies.

In recent weeks, Patrols have been conducted in both Guyra and Armidale engaging water users for educational purposes with people breaching the water restrictions advised of the requirements and impending enforcement.

Enforcement of the water restrictions started this week and will include on-the-spot fines. Council is working directly with the high water users in Armidale and Guyra including the UNE and the Elm Street Tomato Farm in order to reduce consumption.

Council presently has separate drought management plans for Guyra and Armidale, both of which predate the latest water yield studies of the catchment. Both plans are intended as dynamic aids to guide decisions as a drought advances with actions refined in response to climate and changes in water consumption, or not as the case may be.

A new combined Drought Management Plan will be presented to Council in draft form in the coming months with the intent that this plan is put on public exhibition.

A Project Control Group has been established to manage the drought response. Key activities include:

- Community engagement including education programs
- Visitor engagement through motels and caravan parks
- Individual discussion with high water users
- Exemptions application management
- Patrols and enforcement
- Data analysis and water use targets
- Investigation of rebate schemes for water efficient fittings
- Leak detection
- Smart meters analysis
- Investigation of groundwater as an emergency water source
- Reduction in Council's use of water used externally e.g. parks, gardens and playing fields.

Conclusion

The New England Region is experiencing the worst drought in 40 years. This drought has seriously impacted water supplies for both Armidale and Guyra resulting in Level 4 water restrictions. Residents and visitors to Armidale and Guyra are requested to proactively reduce their water consumption.

Item: 8.1 **Ref:** AINT/2019/10687
Title: FOR DECISION: Community Meetings for Draft 2019/20 Budget
Container: ARC16/0025
Author: Margaret O'Connor, Councillor
Attachments: Nil

MOTION

That Council hold two community meetings during the draft 19/20 budget period of exhibition: one in Armidale and the other in Guyra so that the community can be properly engaged in the budget process.

Management Comment: A Communications and Engagement Plan is in place for the Draft 2019/2020 Operational Plan and Budget. The plan aims to maximise community awareness and feedback to the draft 2019/2020 Operational Plan and Budget and maximise community understanding and support for the adopted 2019/2020 Operational Plan and Budget.

As part of this plan, a community workshop is planned to be held in the last week of May. An invitation will be extended to delegates from residents and progress associations, business groups, Local Advisory Committees, the Guyra Save and Grow group, youth council and Aboriginal Advisory Groups. Expressions of interest for other individuals/groups interested in attending will also be invited. This strategy has been adopted to ensure a broad cross section of the community is represented and to help foster an environment for constructive participation. Previous experience with community meetings of this nature has shown that attendance is also likely to be higher when targeted invitations are distributed. The meeting is proposed to be held in Black Mountain to emphasise Council's regional remit.

Item: 8.2 **Ref:** AINT/2019/10694
Title: FOR DECISION: Grant projects in 2019/20 Operational Plan and Budget
Container: ARC16/0025
Author: Margaret O'Connor, Councillor
Attachments: Nil

MOTION

That in respect of all projects for which Council holds grants they be included in the 2019/2020 operational plan and budget and if necessary Council go to contract to ensure completion of those projects.

Management Comment:

The recommended Capital Budget scenario in the 2019/20 Operational Plan and Budget contains a large proportion of contracted works. A substantial proportion of internal works are required in order to prepare, manage and administer contracts and external funding agreements. These internal works were carefully considered in the budget preparation process and the volume of internal resources to manage contracted works has already been maximised in the recommended scenario.

If Council was to increase capital budget and number of projects as requested, there would be a significant increase to a number of risks, including but not limited to: budget overruns, poor project planning and project management discipline, incomplete projects, poor quality of works and public safety.

The impact of the new build projects will increase operational expenditure and the likelihood of a large proportion of incomplete projects within the capital budget will decrease the overall asset renewal ratio.

The following projects, which constitute projects where grant funding has been awarded, have not been funded in the 2019-20 draft budget:

Project	Total Approved Project Value	Council Funding	Estimated Annual Operating Cost
Armidale Hydrotherapy Pool H1	\$1,457,595	\$364,399	\$300,000
Armidale Regional Adventure Playground	\$999,700	\$-	
Mother of Ducks Lagoon and Nature Reserve Upgrade Phase 2	\$459,182	\$-	
Airport Precinct FCC Preliminary	\$350,000	\$-	
Guyra Preschool Upgrade Stage 1	\$600,000	\$300,000	
Saumarez Road - Upgrade of private access road at Saumarez Homestead from the second cattle grid to the Jackson Centre	\$2,700,000	\$730,000	
Total	\$6,566,477	\$1,394,099	\$300,000
Increase in Council Capital Expenditure	\$3,866,477	\$664,399	
Increase in Council Operating Expenditure		\$730,000	\$300,000

Without an offset, the addition of these projects to the 2019-20 draft budget would result in a negative General Fund cash position of around \$456,000 and an operating deficit of around \$1 million.

This would represent an unacceptable cash result and necessitate reconsideration of items in the draft capital program, for example, the airport apron project (which is also partly grant funded). Due to the limited funding available for the draft capital program, it is not possible to include the above projects without impacting other grant funded projects.

Council was in the bottom 10 councils in NSW for unrestricted cash and internal reserves in the 2017-18 financial year and must put a strategy in place to improve this result to avoid exposure to unacceptable financial risk.

Item:	8.3	Ref: AINT/2019/10702
Title:	FOR DECISION: Public Exhibition of Civic Prayer (Code of Meeting Practice)	Container: ARC16/0025
Author:	Margaret O'Connor, Councillor	
Attachments:	Nil	

MOTION

That in relation to the Civic Prayer component of the Code of Meeting Practice, Council extend the consultation period for a further 28 days with appropriate " Have your Say and other searchability of the topic " Civic Prayer" on Council's website so that the community has the opportunity to find the topic and respond to it if they wish, and in this regard, that part of the Code of Meeting Practice item be deferred until the Ordinary Council Meeting in July 2019.

Management Comment: The Code of Meeting Practice which includes a Civic Affirmation was placed on public exhibition on Council's "Have Your Say" page from Friday 29 March to Wednesday 15 May 2019. This is longer than the standard 28 days public exhibition period.

This public exhibition period for the Code of Meeting Practice was endorsed and adopted by Council at the Ordinary Council Meeting on 27 March 2019. The public comment period was incorrectly notified in some places as being from 29 March to 29 April, however it is important to note that despite the submission dates being incorrectly notified, the bulk of the submissions were received after 29 April and have been considered in the report presented to Council today.

Item: 8.4 **Ref:** AINT/2019/10713
Title: FOR DECISION: Dates for Public Submissions **Container:** ARC16/0025
Author: Dorothy Robinson, Councillor
Attachments: Nil

MOTION:

That, unless council intends to process public submissions over the weekend after 5pm on Friday, the deadline for public submissions is extended to 8:30 am the following Monday.

Background:

Draft policies are put on public submission to encourage feedback and transparency of government. In some cases, knowledgeable members of the public can provide valuable additional information and insights. Extending the deadline for submissions over the weekend allows more time for residents who work during the week to prepare and check their submissions (and so improve the quality of those submissions) without causing any delays to council processes.

Many of our residents are also likely to find the current process confusing. For example, two closing dates are provided for the draft EcoARC consultation (3 April and 17 May), as well as a Public Exhibition period from 3 April to 3 May – see screenshot below. Moreover, the ‘have your say’ website has not yet been updated in line with Council’s resolution in Feb 2019 that public submissions will be treated as non-confidential unless the submitter specifically requests confidentiality. Submitters are also allowed to have their submissions treated as non-confidential, except for the name of the submitter, or other identifying material.

Exhibition of draft EcoARC (Council's greenprint strategy)

yoursay.armidale.nsw.gov.au/exhibition-of-draft-ecoarc



Council has developed its 'greenprint' strategy for environmental sustainability. Entitled EcoARC, the strategy guides its own operations and aims to assist groups in the community to achieve sustainability in the Armidale region. EcoARC's objectives and actions are grouped into nine topics:

- Transport
- Water
- Waste
- Air
- Biodiversity
- Resilience
- Living
- Future
- Global

The draft policy is on Public Exhibition from Wednesday 3 April to Friday 3 May 2019.

Submissions close Friday 17 May 2019.

The community are invited to make submissions by mail to Armidale Regional Council, 75A Rusden Street, Armidale 2350, by email to council@armidale.nsw.gov.au or dropped off in person to the Armidale or Guyra Offices. Submissions close Wednesday 3 April 2019 at 5pm.

Item: 8.5 **Ref:** AINT/2019/10714
Title: FOR DECISION: Public Meeting: Budget Proposals **Container:**
ARC16/0025
Author: Dorothy Robinson, Councillor
Attachments: Nil

MOTION:

That council holds a public meeting on the budget proposals.

Management Comment:

The Communication and Engagement Plan of the 2019/20 Budget and Operational Plan includes a planned community workshop.

Item: 18.1 **Ref:** AINT/2019/10685
Title: Questions on Notice - Cr Robinson and Cr O'Connor **Container:**
ARC16/0025
Author: Dorothy Robinson, Councillor
Attachments: Nil

Question on Notice 1. (Cr Robinson and Cr O'Connor)

1) When the QoN was answered at the last council meeting, the cost of hiring a consultant to advise the Transformation project on the Armidale Memorial library was not available. Could the CEO please provide an update?

Question on Notice 2. (Cr Robinson and Cr O'Connor)

At the April 2019 meeting (live stream, 1:52:32) the CEO said: "and in the 2nd quarterly budget the \$60,000 was removed and it was clearly stated as being removed and council adopted the reviewed budget - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TMUNSSQZb2M>

Please provide further information about this clear statement and what consideration was given to the impact on the delivery program.

Question on Notice 3. (Cr Robinson and Cr O'Connor)

Thanks for the answer provided in private to the Question on Notice asked at the March 2019. Is it correct that the answers to questions asked in public meetings should be available to the public? If so, please make the information available to the public.

Question on Notice 1

Answer:

a) \$6644.00.

Question on Notice 2

Answer:

a) The \$60,000 contribution was contingent upon the success of Armidale Regional Council's application for a Smart Cities Grant. Council was unsuccessful and therefore the \$60,000 was not needed. The Delivery Plan has been reviewed as part of the 19/20 Operational Plan process.

Question on Notice 3

Answer:

a) The Office of Local Government advises that Council minutes are to accurately record the meeting. There is no requirement that a response provided at a later date to a Question without Notice or a Question on Notice be reported at a subsequent meeting.