



SOUTHERN DOWNS REGIONAL COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING OF COUNCIL

Dear Councillors

Your attendance is hereby requested at the Special Meeting of Council to be held in the Council Chambers, Southern Downs Regional Council, 64 Fitzroy Street, Warwick on **Tuesday, 7 November 2017** at **9:00AM**.

Notice is hereby given of the business to be transacted at the meeting.

David Keenan

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

3 November 2017

ORDER OF BUSINESS:


1.	ATTENDANCE	1
2.	APOLOGIES.....	1
3.	DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST	1
4.	EXECUTIVE.....	2
4.1	Advocacy Priorities and Projects for the Southern Downs.....	2
4.2	Submission on the 2017 Strategic Review of the Queensland Office of the Ombudsman	14
4.3	Nomination for Inland Rail Community Consultative Committee	19
5.	ENGINEERING SERVICES DEPARTMENT REPORTS.....	23
5.1	Avenue of Honour.....	23

1. **ATTENDANCE**
2. **APOLOGIES**
3. **DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

4. EXECUTIVE

4.1 Advocacy Priorities and Projects for the Southern Downs

Document Information

 Southern Downs REGIONAL COUNCIL	Report To: Special Council Meeting	
	Reporting Officer:	Meeting Date: 7 November 2017
	Chief Executive Officer	ECM Function No/s:

Recommendation

THAT Council endorse and distribute the attached Advocacy Priorities and Projects for the Southern Downs to candidates for the Southern Downs in the upcoming State Government Election.

Report

Council has identified a number of advocacy priorities and projects for the Southern Downs as outlined in the attached draft document "Advocacy Priorities and Projects for the Southern Downs".

The recent announcement of State Government Elections on 25 November 2017 provides Council with the opportunity to inform the candidates for the Southern Downs region of the priorities and projects that Council has identified as significant to the region's residents.

Council may wish to prioritize the draft list to allow a focus on issues that require more urgent advocacy.

Budget Implications

Nil

Policy Consideration

Corporate Plan 2014-2019 Revised Edition

4.7 Lobby State and Federal Governments on issues of concern to the regional community

Community Engagement

Nil

Legislation/Local Law

Nil

Options

1. Council endorse and distribute the attached Advocacy Priorities and Projects for the Southern Downs to candidates for the Southern Downs in the upcoming State Government Election.

2. Council not endorse or distribute the attached Advocacy Priorities and Projects for the Southern Downs to candidates for the Southern Downs in the upcoming State Government Election.
3. Council amend the attached Advocacy Priorities and Projects for the Southern Downs and distribute to candidates for the Southern Downs in the upcoming State Government Election.

Attachments

1. Advocacy Priorities and Projects for Southern Downs [View](#)



Advocacy Priorities and Projects for the Southern Downs

Road Safety – Highway Task Force (Accommodation Creek, 8 Mile Turnoff and Sandy Creek Turnoff)

The Cunningham and New England Highways, between Yamanto in Queensland and Bolivia Hill in NSW, traverse three local government areas: Scenic Rim, Southern Downs and Tenterfield. These Highways traverse two States and are managed by several Transport and Main Roads Regional Directors: South Coast, Darling Downs South West and Tenterfield. Priorities for the highways' maintenance and upgrades vary from one State to another and from one region to another; and a consistent approach is required for the adequate delivery of services to the road user.

Upgrade and Maintenance of Rail Links

There are few local government areas that are experiencing the type of economic growth and resurgence that the Southern Downs Region is at present. Albeit the growth appears to be centred on Warwick and Allora at present, the direct and indirect economic benefits will impact the whole region and the State. Investment in food processing, intensive agriculture, manufacturing, transport and logistics, as well as employment being generated through new aged care facilities and retail development means that the Southern Downs economy is performing very well and will place new demands on the integrated transport networks.

Whilst Warwick is well recognised as a freight and distribution hub for Queensland and the east coast of Australia, more strategic work needs to be undertaken in relation to how the existing rail network can be upgraded to meet the future needs that are emerging from existing and new businesses in the region. It is recognised that there are a number of connected green-field rail sites, many of them in the final stages of planning that can be rapidly developed into intermodal options allowing for raw and processed product to be containerized and moved to markets, both domestically and internationally.

Southern Downs Regional Council acknowledges that the Inland Rail will not now play a role in the Southern Downs Region, however Council is keen to see the existing rail infrastructure upgraded to accommodate the present and future growth. Southern Downs Regional Council has real concerns that there is the possibility that the State Government is seeking to lower the maintenance standards and potentially discontinue the operation of State Rail Freight Routes in South Western Queensland.

Southern Downs Regional Council contends that the State Rail Freight Routes in South Western Queensland remain important components of infrastructure that contribute to an overall chain of supply that supports the agricultural sector which is the main driver of the local economies across South Western Queensland. Southern Downs Regional Council submits that any downgrading or minimizing of services related to the rail networks would have a direct impact on the local economy and result in the loss of employment and the potential reduction in the generation of on farm income, as well as employment losses in food processing.

Additionally, Southern Downs Regional Council believes that the State Government and Queensland Rail have an obligation to maintain this important infrastructure to meet the needs of local producers and the expectations of the greater South West Queensland community. Council is supportive of all aspects of rail, especially where there is the opportunity to utilize rail over road transport, if it is financially viable.

Furthermore, after meeting with the surrounding local government authorities, Southern Downs Regional Council supports the following actions:

- Two connectors are installed at Toowoomba and Goondiwindi (where the Inland Rail intersects the South West Rail Link). This would allow a connection at two points south and north of the Southern Downs.
- That the South West Rail Link from Toowoomba, via Warwick, through to Goondiwindi (where it intersects with the Inland Rail) be dual gauged. Or at least Toowoomba to Warwick be dual gauged. This would allow for standard gauge locomotives and rolling stock to be able to access the Inland Rail at either Goondiwindi or Toowoomba; and continue north or south on that rail line. This would also allow for the continuation of tourist steam train operations, which is an important piece of tourism product in this region.
- That QR considers handing over or selling the South West Rail Link and its maintenance to ARTC.
- That the South West Rail Link branch from Warwick to Wallangarra remain narrow gauge but continue to be maintained by QR or ARTC.

Southern Downs Regional Council is seeking a commitment from the State Government that it will maintain and continue the operation of State Rail Freight Routes in South Western Queensland. Should the State Government provide this commitment, Southern Downs Regional Council believes that this will provide confidence to the agricultural sector and facilitate investment decisions relating to on farm production as well as investment and employment generation in transport infrastructure.

Should the State Government be unable to make this commitment, Southern Downs Regional Council would be concerned that speculation around the potential cessation of maintenance and the potential closure the operation of State Rail Freight Routes in South Western Queensland will lead to economic uncertainty and impede on the logical and orderly planning of the region.

Continue to Lobby the State Government on Managing Invasive Pests on State Land

Southern Downs Regional Council has written to all State Government Agencies and Departments that own or manage land in the Southern Downs Region to inform them of the Invasive Pest Control Scheme. Whilst State Government Agencies and Departments are not required to participate in the Scheme, Southern Downs Regional Council has an expectation that all State Government land will be managed effectively in relation to weeds and pests.

Review Darling Downs Regional Plan (2013)

The *Darling Downs Regional Plan* was produced in 2013 and contains very few recommendations that relate to the Southern Downs Region. Southern Downs Regional Council through its submission to *Shaping South East Queensland* formally requested a review of the *Darling Downs Regional Plan*.

It is the expectation of Council that *the Darling Downs Regional Plan* will be reviewed in the short term to better represent the changing communities of the Southern Downs

Development of a State-owned Facility (e.g. Hermitage and the Applethorpe Facility)

There are some State Government owned research centres located in the Southern Downs Region and Council would support a higher level of investment in these important facilities that support the very successful agricultural and agribusiness sector.

Rabbit and Dog Fence Funding

Additional funding for Rabbit and Dog fencing would be welcomed to support the farming communities of the Southern Downs. Relatively recently, Thomas Foods was forced to close leaving 250 people without employment, due to an inadequate supply of sheep. A major reason for the reduction in the Queensland flock size is due to wild dogs. Further actions to reduce the numbers of or the impact of wild dogs would be welcomed by Southern Downs Regional Council.

4-Year Infrastructure Funding Program from State Government (linked to 4 year funding)

Southern Downs Regional Council would welcome longer term funding commitments, rather than funds that are allocated on a year by year basis. This would allow local government authorities to better plan the delivery of important capital works. Southern Downs Regional Council would also welcome discrete funding for specific types of infrastructure such as:

- Aerodromes
- Saleyards
- Water and Wastewater Infrastructure

Works4Qld Applied to Projects that are also in the Capital Works Program

Southern Downs Regional Council has welcomed the funding allocated under Works4Queensland. It is submitted that this funding program could be better improved if it was permitted to be used for works identified in the first year of the capital works program.

Advocating for Subsidized Public Bus Service to Warwick

Through upgrades to key road networks, the capacity for the residents of the Southern Downs to access the outer suburbs or central business district of Brisbane is increasing rapidly. Whilst the time of the trip has shortened, the cost of accessing Brisbane remains prohibitive. From Warwick to Brisbane the cost is \$58 one way, this is expensive for members of the local community.

Council would welcome a subsidized bus service to Brisbane from both Warwick and Stanthorpe, as well as an increase in subsidized services between the population centres of the Southern Downs to provide better access for young people and those without access to private transport.

Urban Water Security for Stanthorpe

Southern Downs Regional Council undertook a Regional Water Security Supply Assessment with the Department of Energy and Water Supply that looked at the urban water security needs of Stanthorpe until 2036. Additionally, Southern Downs Regional Council has adopted the Emu Swamp Dam Business Case Stage 1.

Southern Downs Regional Council would seek to engage with the State Government to deliver an urban water solution for Stanthorpe that is financially sustainable and meets the needs of the urban users.

Funding for Wastewater Assets

The rapid aging of wastewater assets and the need to recycle water wherever possible to facilitate agribusiness and community recreational areas requires a joint approach from State Government and local government authorities. Southern Downs Regional Council supports the reintroduction of discrete funding directed towards the renewal of wastewater assets to deliver high quality recycled water to the community at an affordable price. This is particularly relevant to the Stanthorpe Wastewater Treatment Plant which requires a significant upgrade.

Transparent and Simple Water Trading Rules

Southern Downs Regional Council believes that the State Government should consider a formalization of local government's involvement in catchment planning in relation to surface and underground water management. Local governments have, in the past, been engaged in a haphazard manner by the State Government in relation to all aspects of water planning and catchment management.

Most recently, Southern Downs Regional Council has had to advocate to become involved in the consultation process for the Regional Operational Plans for the Border Rivers Catchment and the Moonie Catchment. Given the important role local government plays in relation to the supply of domestic water outside of the Unity Water System and the role local government has in the management of bulk water resources such as dams and off-stream storages, it is submitted that local government representatives should have a higher degree of formalized input into this level of planning.

This would include advice on the implementation or removal of moratoriums for overflow water as well as formalized input into the conversion of licences into volumetric allocations as well as better management of localized catchments.

The desired outcome is a higher level of involvement from local government in the allocation of water resources across their districts and increased responsibility in relation to matching future strategic community plans to allow the optimal utilization or conservation of water resources. The impacts are likely to be positive in that there will be higher water strategic planning and a better use of resources which is consistent with the State Government's Bulk Water Statement that was released earlier this year.

Cluster Fencing around Morgan Park Raceway

Significant numbers of kangaroos have the potential to cause accidents during the holding of major motorsport events. Given that many of these events are of State significance and have a positive impact on the local and State economy, Southern Downs Regional Council would welcome the opportunity to undertake a joint project with the State Government to install cluster fencing to reduce the likelihood of incidents or accidents occurring.

Sewer for Allora (MIPP) for Funding once the Initial Planning is done

For over a decade, Southern Downs Regional Council and its predecessor Councils have been examining the potential to provide a wastewater or sewer solution for the township of Allora. A number of years ago, Southern Downs Regional Council made the decision to extend the reticulated water system to Allora, replacing the system of bores that had previously serviced the town and providing infrastructure that lead to better quality water being delivered to residents.

With regard to the installation of wastewater or sewer to Allora, at present the businesses and residents of Allora and its surrounds are serviced by a large number of private septic systems. The use of the septic systems is problematic and requires a high level of compliance from residents and businesses, as well as Council officers' time to ensure that maintenance is being appropriately carried out.

Southern Downs Regional Council has previously undertaken community consultation in relation to this project, and although this consultation process would need to be revisited, there would appear to be widespread support for this project. The support for the project stems from the economic and community opportunities that will arise from the provision of wastewater or sewer infrastructure for Allora.

At this point in time Allora has a number of opportunities that cannot be realised due to the lack of wastewater or sewer infrastructure. This includes the expansion of the Blue Care aged services facility and a number of other proposed subdivisions that would accommodate different levels of development, leading to sustained employment and investment.

Southern Downs Regional Council is keen to explore the mechanisms by which this important infrastructure can be delivered to the Allora community to provide the opportunities for expansion and development in this important town.

Funding for Maintenance Upgrades of Historical Buildings (not just Council owned)

Southern Downs Regional Council seeks the establishment or expansion of funding opportunities to preserve historical and heritage buildings. Whilst many buildings or structures are identified on Southern Downs Regional Council's asset list, the capacity of Council to fund the upgrade or restoration of these facilities is limited.

Funding for Fire Trail Maintenance

Southern Downs Regional Council has welcomed the funding received for the maintenance and upgrade of fire trails through Works4Queensland. Council would welcome the continuation of this funding so Council and the local brigades can continue this important work.

Streetscapes Warwick and Stanthorpe

Southern Downs Regional Council has undertaken streetscape plans for both Warwick and Stanthorpe. These upgrades should be undertaken in partnership to increase visitation, retain escape expenditure and facilitate employment.

Upgrade Toilet/Shower Facilities at Sporting Grounds to Include Female Facilities

All sporting change room facilities are captured within the Community Buildings Asset Management Plan. Also captured within this information is the fact that many of these facilities lack toilet and showering facilities, especially in relation to the provision of these facilities for female athletes.

Given the exceptionally high levels of obesity and overweightness in both Warwick and Stanthorpe, Southern Downs Regional Council would welcome a funding program that can upgrade these facilities over time and encourage higher levels of participation.

Re-seal Camell Raceway and Extension to Warwick Drag Strip

Motorsports plays an important role in the local economy and Southern Downs Regional Council would welcome discrete funding streams that support the extension and resealing of motorsports facilities.

Funding for Upgrade of Heavy Vehicle Access Roads

Southern Downs Regional Council has undertaken extensive consultation with the farming and the transport sector that utilises heavy transport and is seeking more access to roads across the municipality. Council would be keen to work with a future State Government to simplify the categorisation of roads to support heavy vehicle movements.

Warwick Heavy Vehicle By-Pass Project

The New England Highway is a major interstate freight route and is part of the National route. The Cunningham Highway links the urban outskirts of Brisbane and the Darling Downs Region. It is also a national highway.

The existing New England Highway and Cunningham Highway are part of the main thoroughfare of Warwick (Albion, Wood and Wallace Streets. Albion and Wood Street experience road safety and local congestion problems associated with central business district traffic, as well as the mixing of local, regional and long distance traffic, including large heavy vehicles. Albion, Wood and Wallace Streets are relatively narrow, carrying in parts four traffic lanes (two lanes in each direction) very little space is allowed for parking on each side. These roads provide access to the town's retail and commercial sector. There are a number of pedestrian crossings and the speed limit is 60 km/h.

The Darling Downs Regional Plan emphasises the importance of efficient movement of freight in Queensland. It proposes actions to grow future freight network capacity through targeted investments that expand capacity and maintain strong international, interstate and intrastate connectivity.

The Warwick By-Pass would improve travel efficiency for heavy vehicles along the New England Highway and Cunningham Highway. These Highways both interstate and intrastate significance, in that it:

- Forms part of the National Highway Network (and facilitates the movement of interstate freight between Queensland and New South Wales).
- Serves as the primary access route for the grazing, forestry and agricultural industries based in the Darling Downs and Granite Belt regions of QLD.

The proposed By-Pass will improve travel within Warwick, reducing congestion and delays caused by freight traffic and increase safety. The By-Pass would deliver an efficient and effective transport system to the greater region of Southern Downs enhancing livability of the Warwick and surrounding areas. Southern Downs Regional Council would encourage a future State Government to commence this investigation.

Hydro-generation at the Two Gravity Fed Dams (Connolly and Storm King)

Southern Downs Regional Council operates two water storage facilities, Connolly Dam located south of Warwick and Storm King Dam east of Stanthorpe. Each of these storages supplies a proportion of or act as the single supply of treated water to these towns. Connolly Dam is located 15 kilometres southeast of Warwick, was constructed in 1927 and has a storage capacity of 2,592 ML. Storm King Dam was built in 1954 and is located on Quart Pot Creek, approximately 8 km south-east of Stanthorpe. Storm King Dam has a storage capacity of 2,180 ML.

Southern Downs Regional Council is keen to utilise all assets managed by Council to their fullest capacity. It is with that in mind that Council would like to investigate the potential for the generation of renewable energy through a hydro or micro hydroelectricity scheme. Council recognises the installation of such infrastructure at Connolly and Storm King Dams could provide a number of tangible benefits to the community, as well as making a contribution towards Council's long term sustainability, both financially and environmentally.

The potential ability to supply cost effective energy to ratepayers and businesses would create a competitive advantage for the region and demonstrate best practice in relation to the full utilisation of assets and a commitment towards sustainable development. It is envisaged that the installation of hydroelectricity will facilitate employment and may even attract third party investment; subject to the business planning that is yet to be undertaken.

All Weather Facility for Horse and Other Events

The Warwick Show and Rodeo Society is proposing the development of an Indoor Conference and Exhibition Facility, which is supported by Southern Downs Regional Council. The increasing success of the Annual Warwick Rodeo and Campdraft is providing significant ongoing economic benefit to the Southern Downs region and there is a defined and demonstrated need to provide new infrastructure to complement the existing infrastructure, thereby increasing the capture of new expenditure for the region, facilitating additional events and diversifying the businesses offering available at the Showgrounds.

The proposed infrastructure is likely to increase employment both directly and indirectly by providing a destination for major events that will meet the needs of the region, as well as creating infrastructure that will allow the region to compete for events that are seeking a home. Should the facility be developed, the financial viability of the Warwick Show and Rodeo Society will be further enhanced as the income streams will be diversified and the levels of risk lowered. A world class facility will spurn on the increasing levels of visitation to the region and provide the impetus for accommodation providers to upgrade their facilities to meet the demand.

Additionally, from a hospitality perspective, there will be the opportunity to increase customers as well as offer regional produce to locals and visitors to the area. As the Southern Downs Region becomes more accessible to the urban areas of Brisbane, the opportunity to host conferences and events will lead to increased prosperity and employment for the region.

Business Incubator or Accelerator

Southern Downs Regional Council would welcome the establishment of a Business Incubator or Accelerator to be developed in partnership with the State Government, business and industry and educational providers.

Providing an affordable environment in which startup businesses have the opportunity to establish their businesses whilst being mentored by people with suitable experience, would increase the level of retention of young people in the region, as well as provide a pathway for young entrepreneurs. The facility could be located in Warwick or Stanthorpe.

Relocation of State Government Offices

Submissions have been made by Southern Downs Regional Council to both levels of government to consider increasing or establishing new office space or facilities in the Southern Downs Region. Council believes that the existing community, economic, recreation and social infrastructure would support a greater presence of public sector investment in the region.

Additional Resources for Dealing with Violence in the Community

Southern Downs Regional Council remains concerned with the increasing level of violence in the different communities of the region. Council is pro-active in promoting a message of "Say No to Violence," but believes that this needs to be supported by all tiers of government.

Recognition of the Impact of Backpackers on the Local Economy

There are a number of local government authorities that are impacted by short term population increases related to foreign backpackers engaged in the harvesting of fruit and vegetables. Southern Downs Regional Council has undertaken a number of initiatives through a Backpacker's Taskforce to welcome backpackers to the region, provide information about safe living and driving in the region.

Southern Downs Regional Council would welcome further involvement by State Government in the establishment of a strategy to better coordinate the resources required to support this important part of the agribusiness sector.

Funding for a Campaign to Attract More People to the Southern Downs to Fill Jobs

Over the next few years there are likely to be in excess of 700 jobs to be created in the Southern Downs Region. Real concerns exist in relation to the capacity of the local labour pool to meet the anticipated demand. Population growth in the Southern Downs is slow at 0.01%.

Southern Downs Regional Council would welcome the opportunity to work with the State Government to bring more people into the regions to accommodate the forecast employment growth. Council has the necessary infrastructure in place, but requires a positive campaign to attract people from urban centres or regional cities that may have higher unemployment levels or people that are considering a move to a regional area to access a better standard of living.

Clear Direction Around Policies Relating to Poultry Production

Southern Downs Regional Council has concerns relating to the draft proposal paper on the DILGP Poultry Farming Regulatory Reforms. Council believes that there needs to be a review of the proposals, as they are suggesting a return to what was a flawed system, which existed prior to the current assessment process.

Council is concerned that the papers put too much reliance on the proposed State wide Code and ignore the likelihood that Council will return to a system that is totally inconsistent in terms of the decision making process by different Councils. Issues relating to land use assessment would be more appropriately dealt with through amendments to Council Planning Schemes for the specific Councils experiencing concerns with large poultry farm proposals.

Southern Downs Regional Council wishes to support the expansion of poultry production in the municipality, but only with the appropriate assessment processes in place.

Funding to Deal with Obesity and Overweightness

A submission was made to the previous State Government in regard to Southern Downs Regional Council seeking to have the *Healthy Futures Commission* based in the Southern Downs. Warwick and Stanthorpe have some of the highest levels of obesity and overweightness in Queensland, and this is in an environment where the population is quickly ageing.

Council would welcome the opportunity to work with a future State Government to continue to deliver the programs that Council has been providing, but also seek more effective direct initiatives that will facilitate a healthy community.

Incentives for Local Government to Develop Solar Energy Production

Southern Downs Regional Council believes further incentives should be provided by State Government in relation to the installation of solar energy infrastructure on public buildings.

Council believes that energy costs are a major financial issue for the sustainability of local government, as well as community groups and businesses.

A Clear Direction on the Future of the TAFE In Warwick

Clarification on the future of the TAFE facility in Warwick would be welcomed by Southern Downs Regional Council. It is noted that no firm direction has been communicated to Council and other stakeholders and as Council undertakes its strategic planning for the future it is integral to determine the future of the TAFE.

Support for the Review of Councillors Complaints

Southern Downs Regional Council recently endorsed a submission to a Parliamentary Committee considering reforms to the Councillor Complaint process. Amongst other comments, Southern Downs Regional Council has a preference that all complaints be dealt with in 45 business days. This allows for the resolving of issues quickly, rather than the current practice where complaints are investigated for up to six months, often creating a difficult environment in the Council Chamber.

Support for the Recommendations from Belcarra Review

Southern Downs Regional Council recently endorsed a submission to a Parliamentary Committee considering the recommendations from the Belcarra Review. Whilst Council, supports all the recommendations relating to political donations, Council has serious concerns in relation to the practical implementation of the proposed changes in dealing with the conflict of interest.

Natural Gas to Warwick

As the level of business activity increases in Warwick and larger food processing opportunities are realised, Southern Downs Regional Council would support the continued investigation of the viability of the construction of a pipeline to provide Warwick with natural gas from Toowoomba. This issue has previously been investigated by the Department of State Development and Council would welcome this important piece of infrastructure being identified in a future State Infrastructure Plan.

Support for the Establishment of the Election Monitor

Southern Downs Regional Council has endorsed the establishment of the Election Monitor, as proposed by the Queensland Local Government Association. Council believes that this initiative should be supported by a future State Government to ensure transparency and honesty in the reporting of local government election issues and to provide the community with facts rather than fiction.

Review of the River Trusts


The State Government should consider either the abandonment of River Trusts or the reallocation of the resources currently committed to River Trusts to local government authorities.

Southern Downs Regional Council finds it difficult to forecast the level of resources required by the two River Trusts that operate within its municipal area. It is noted that each of the River Trusts are required under legislation to prepare strategic plans, however many of the River Trusts across the State have not undertaken a revision of their plans for over a decade.

Southern Downs Regional Council is seeking the effective use of funds and resources to support the different waterways within the Southern Downs and across the State. As indicated above, it is about a coordination of resources and strategic planning to deliver benefits to the broader community.

4.2 Submission on the 2017 Strategic Review of the Queensland Office of the Ombudsman

Document Information

 Southern Downs REGIONAL COUNCIL	Report To: Special Council Meeting	
	Reporting Officer:	Meeting Date: 7 November 2017
	Chief Executive Officer	ECM Function No/s:

Recommendation

THAT Council endorse the attached Submission on the 2017 Strategic Review of the Queensland Office of the Ombudsman.

Report

The Governor in Council recently appointed a Strategic Business Consulting Service to conduct a Strategic Review of the Queensland Office of the Ombudsman. Such review is required at least every seven years under the *Ombudsman Act 2001*.

The Review's Terms of Reference require assessment, advice and recommendations about the Queensland Ombudsman's functions and whether those functions are being performed economically, effectively and efficiently. The Review will also examine all structural and operational aspects of the Ombudsman, as well as its relationship with public sector entities, relevant Ministers, the Parliamentary Committee and the Legislative Assembly.

Council has been invited to provide a written submission on the Review, and a draft Submission is attached for Council's consideration and endorsement.

Submissions close on 17 November 2017.

Budget Implications

Nil

Policy Consideration

Nil

Community Engagement

Nil

Legislation/Local Law

Ombudsman Act 2001.

Options

Council:

1. Endorse the attached Submission on the Strategic Review of the Queensland Office of the Ombudsman.

2. Not endorse the attached Submission on the Strategic Review of the Queensland Office of the Ombudsman.

Attachments

1. Draft Submission 2017 Strategic Review of the Queensland Office of the Ombudsman [View](#)



3 November 2017

Ms Simone Webbe
Director
RATIO D. PTY LTD
Strategic Business Consulting Services

Email: ratio.d.correspondence@gmail.com

Please address all
communications to:

The Chief Executive Officer

Southern Downs

Regional Council

PO Box 26

Warwick Qld 4370

mail@sdrc.qld.gov.au

www.sdrc.qld.gov.au

abn 59 786 792 651

Warwick Office

64 Fitzroy Street

Warwick Qld 4370

Stanthorpe Office

61 Marsh Street

Stanthorpe Qld 4380

t 1300 MY SDRC

(1300 697 372)

f 07 4661 0333

Dear Ms Webbe

Re: 2017 Strategic Review of the Office of the Ombudsman

Southern Downs Regional Council would like to make a submission to the 2017 Strategic Review of the Office of the Ombudsman.

Council officers are in regular contact with the Office of the Ombudsman over a diversity of matters. This can range from planning matters to contractual arrangements, as well as complaints about Council employees and services.

It is noted that the Strategic Review will focus on two areas:

- a) a review of the Ombudsman's functions; and
- b) a review of the Ombudsman's performance of the functions to assess whether they are being performed economically, effectively and efficiently.

It is noted that the functions of the Ombudsman are as follows:

12 Functions of Ombudsman

The functions of the Ombudsman are—

- (a) *to investigate administrative actions of agencies—*
 - (i) *on reference from the Assembly or a statutory committee of the Assembly; or*
 - (ii) *on complaint; or*
 - (iii) *on the Ombudsman's own initiative; and*
- (b) *to consider the administrative practices and procedures of an agency whose actions are being investigated and to make recommendations to the agency—*
 - (i) *about appropriate ways of addressing the effects of inappropriate administrative actions; or*
 - (ii) *for the improvement of the practices and procedures; and*
- (c) *to consider the administrative practices and procedures of agencies generally and to make recommendations or provide information or other help to the agencies for the improvement of the practices and procedures; and*
- (d) *the other functions conferred on the ombudsman under this or any other Act.*

Southern Downs Regional Council notes the functions of the Ombudsman and wishes to submit that perhaps further consideration need to be given to qualifying the validity of complaints (a)(ii) prior to an investigation taking place.

Southern Downs Regional Council receives complaints on a variety of issues and from different stakeholders. There is a small segment of the community that consistently makes complaints to Council and other agencies on a very regular basis. In many instances the complaints are without substance and are lodged for political, personal or vexatious reasons. There is an expectation by the complainant that they should not be required to make a financial contribution to the process, rather the investigation of a complaint should be fully funded by local or State Government. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome it is not uncommon for the complainant to seek another agency or Government Department.

Southern Downs Regional Council believes that it would be helpful to have a hierarchical process developed which clearly defines how a complaint, once determined valid, can be considered and assessed, clearly outlining how the complaint can be appealed or dismissed.

Southern Downs Regional Council notes that the following Departments, Agencies or Statutory Authorities are involved in the complaint process:

- Office of the Ombudsman
- Local government authorities
- Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning
- Office of the Information Commissioner
- Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal
- Crime and Corruption Commission

Council notes that it is not uncommon for the same complaint to be sent to all of these Departments, Agencies or Statutory Authorities, or for a complaint to proceed through each of these agencies, with the exception being the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal. In regard to the latter, a fee is required to proceed with the complaint in the Tribunal and often those making the complaint are not prepared to pay the fee.

Council notes that there is no hierarchy of which Department, Agency or Statutory Authority has precedence of a decision made around a complaint, perhaps with the exception that the assessment of complaints by local government authorities appears to be able to be overturned by the Office of the Ombudsman and other agencies.

The establishment of a clear process by which those persons making complaints can comprehend the potential pathway for the complaint to be determined would be welcomed by Southern Downs Regional Council, if this process does not already exist. A clearly defined process would also reduce different agencies dealing with the same complaint concurrently or in a piecemeal approach, and lead to the more efficient deployment of resources.

Whilst Southern Downs Regional Council interacts with the Office of the Ombudsman, Council officers are aware of any staff or representatives physically only visit the Southern Downs Regional Council only once every one to two years. Council believes that it would be worthwhile for staff from the Office of the Ombudsman to visit local government offices on a more regular basis to brief Councillors and Council staff on the role and responsibilities of the Ombudsman.

Furthermore, given that staff employed at the Office of the Ombudsman have not been necessarily employed in local government it would be beneficial for those staff to receive a better understanding of the local government environment.

Additionally, Council believes that it would be appropriate for the Office of the Ombudsman to brief the community on its role and responsibilities on a regular basis. In relation to the second part of the terms of reference, namely "a review of the Ombudsman's performance of the functions to assess whether they are being performed economically, effectively and efficiently", Council wishes to make the following observations.

The cost of dealing with complaints is increasing. This is in relation to the number of complaints, the level of expertise required to respond to complaints and the utilization of local government resources to respond appropriately and within required timeframes.

Whilst the cost of complaints is rising, it is important to determine the percentage of complaints that are being sustained and the ramifications for the responsible authority when complaints are sustained.

When a complaint is sustained, is the assessment of the complaint leading to significant changes in processes? Are complaints that are sustained creating new processes or outcomes that are then being implemented across the local government sector, or are the reforms from the complaints being acted upon in isolation at the local government authority where the complaint emanated from? Should an innovative complaint assessment process be adding value to potential best practice across the local government sector?

With regard to the performance of the Office of the Ombudsman in relation to performing its role in an effective, economic and efficient manner, Southern Downs Regional Council is not in a position to comment directly on these aspects without further information. Council officers can make the observation that the actions of the Office of the Ombudsman has a direct impact on the effective, economic and efficient manner in which staff at Southern Downs Regional Council undertake their duties. The number of complaints that are being received means that Council will be required to increase the level of services responding to complaints, which more than likely will require an additional staffing resource.

Additionally Council notes that in some circumstances the complainant refers a complaint to the Ombudsman, which in turn refers the complaint back to the local government authority. This practice does not meet the expectations of the complainant, who believes that the review of the complaint is being undertaken independently of Council and furthermore, this referral back to the local government authority creates additional work and the re-allocation of resources.

Southern Downs Regional Council also notes that the number of complaints that are sustained are relatively low, yet the resources required to process these complaints are relatively high. Council believes, as indicated, that a higher level of scrutiny in relation to the assessment of the complaint in the first instance may be appropriate.

In the last financial year, Southern Downs Regional Council expended approximately \$20,000 in relation to the engagement of independent consultants to assess and manage complaints. This year the amount allocated to dealing with complaints is already forecasted to exceed \$30,000 and consideration is being given to employment of a person within Council to deal with complaints and act as a liaison with the Office of the Ombudsman and other agencies.


Southern Downs Regional Council appreciates the good work undertaken by the Office of the Ombudsman, and would be happy to provide further comment if required.

Yours faithfully

Tracy Dobie
Mayor

4.3 Nomination for Inland Rail Community Consultative Committee

Document Information

 Southern Downs REGIONAL COUNCIL	Report To: Special Council Meeting	
	Reporting Officer:	Meeting Date: 7 November 2017
	Chief Executive Officer	ECM Function No/s:

Recommendation

THAT Council endorse the nomination of Gary Hayes to the Southern Darling Downs Inland Rail Community Consultative Committee.

Report

The Australian Rail Track Corporation is calling for nominations from individuals or representatives from organisations to serve on the Community Consultative Committees which are being established in the areas of Southern Darling Downs, Inner Darling Downs, Lockyer Valley and Scenic Rim where greenfield Inland Rail projects will be taking place.

The roles of each of the Committees is to gather and disseminate information regarding Inland Rail throughout the community and to bring representative views to the Committee. Each Committee will comprise up to 15 members with a range of backgrounds and interests. A copy of the ARTC IR CCC Interim Charter is attached.

Gary Hayes has indicated his interest in nominating for the Southern Darling Downs Community Consultative Committee. Mr Hayes has extensive knowledge and interest in the Inland Rail Project, and would provide valuable input to that Committee and advocate for the Southern Darling Downs.

Nominations close at 5.00pm on 24 November 2017.

Budget Implications

Nil

Policy Consideration

Nil

Community Engagement

Nil

Legislation/Local Law

Nil

Options

Council:

1. Endorse the nomination of Gary Hayes to the Southern Darling Downs Inland Rail Community Consultative Committee.
2. Not endorse the nomination of Gary Hayes to the Southern Darling Downs Inland Rail Community Consultative Committee.

Attachments

1. ARTC IR CCC Interim Charter [View](#)



Australian Government

BUILDING OUR FUTURE



INTERIM CHARTER

REGIONAL AND COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Community Consultative Committee (Committee) is for the ARTC Inland Rail Project Team (Project Team) to consult with selected representatives from the community and various interest groups for the relevant Inland Rail Project (Project).

ARTC is seeking from the Committee community input on aspects of the studies required as part of developing the Environmental Impact Statement, as well as provision to ARTC Inland Rail of insights into community issues, concerns and opportunities, for the Project.

The Committee will aim to facilitate:

- ▶ Broader community involvement in the Project;
- ▶ Capture of local knowledge, issues, concerns and opportunities;
- ▶ Increased understanding and awareness of the Project; and
- ▶ Coordination of a more effective response from the Project Team, to emerging issues, concerns and opportunities.

The Charter sets out the scope of the Committee and expectations of behaviours.

SCOPE

The Committee will:

- ▶ Receive briefings and updates on the Project;
- ▶ Discuss and provide comment or feedback on negotiable aspects of the Project;
- ▶ Represent community views regarding local issues, impacts and benefits; and
- ▶ Act as a conduit to provide information about the Project to the broader community.

The Committee is for consultation purposes only and is not a decision-making body.

MEMBERSHIP

The aim of the Committee is to ensure representation of diverse viewpoints and community concerns. It is proposed the Committee will be established with approximately 10 – 15 members from communities along the corridor study area.

The following criteria are proposed to enable assessment of nominations for the Committee:

- ▶ Knowledge of the local area, as evidenced by number of years living in the area, family links to the area (i.e. multi-generational farms) or significant landholdings;
- ▶ Participation in the local community, as evidenced by membership of community groups, business groups, school P&Cs, local or regional NGOs (but not a NGO that is generally recognised as having a state or national focus or reach) etc; and
- ▶ Ability to gather and disseminate information regarding Inland Rail throughout the community and to bring representative views to the work of the Committee.

No person who is a sitting Member of Parliament or Councillor, direct family member (spouse, children, parents) of a sitting MP or Councillor may nominate as a member nor may any person who is employed by a commercial contractor to ARTC.

Membership of the Committee is on a voluntary basis, and no payment is made for participation. However, reimbursement of reasonable travel expenses will be provided if approved by the Chair and ARTC. Members will be appointed for a period of two (2) years with members able to be

appointed for two (2) subsequent terms after which time a member who has served for three (3) terms will not be eligible to serve as a member. There will be a role and functional review at the end of the first 12 months. Adjustments to the Committee, including membership numbers, may be made at this time.

Membership resignations and vacancies

A member's position becomes vacant if they provide their resignation in writing.

A position may be declared vacant if the member:

- ▶ Fails to attend more than two consecutive meetings in the calendar year without prior notice; or
- ▶ Breaches the Committee meeting operating principles outlined below.

A new member can be appointed mid-term following a public call for nominations, if a member resigns and the Committee requires an appointment to ensure fair representation from a specific community or interest group within the Project area.

Appointing an Independent Chair

The Committee will be facilitated by an independent person, referred to as the Chair, with the ARTC Project Team providing secretarial services and project expertise.

ARTC will appoint a suitable person to serve as Independent Chair of the Committee for a period of two (2) years. A Chair will need to be an experienced facilitator and while he or she does not need to live within each project area, they do need to have an understanding of the region. There will be no limit on the number of terms for which a person may serve as Chair and a person may serve as Chair of more than one Committee at the same time. If the position of Chair becomes vacant for any reason, ARTC will then appoint another person into the position of the Chair in the same manner as the initial appointment.

SELECTION PROCESS

Membership of the Committee will be advertised, with calls for nominations from interested parties and residents within the Project area.

Community members who do not belong to a particular interest group, yet have a strong following and are nominated by their local community will also be considered.

All nominations will be considered and appointed by an independently led selection panel, comprised of a representative from an appropriate external body, the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development and ARTC.

Appointed Committee members will be notified in writing, as will those who are not selected. The membership of the Committee will be publicised through appropriate local channels and media.

OPERATING PRINCIPLES

Committee Members

To ensure the Committee achieves its aims, members agree to the following principles:

- ▶ Respect the rights and views of other members;
- ▶ Provide constructive input; and
- ▶ Agree to disseminate information to and gather feedback from the community or group they represent.



Media Liaison

Committee members can speak to the media outside the Committee meetings as individuals about the Project, but not as a spokesperson on behalf of the Committee or the Project. Only the Chair is authorised to speak on behalf of the Committee.

ARTC Inland Rail Project Team

The Project Team agrees to:

- ▶ Provide regular information on the project, including progress updates.
- ▶ Participate in discussions regarding community issues, concerns and opportunities.
- ▶ Where required and possible, organise and participate in site tours with the Committee to broaden awareness and understanding of technical issues (i.e. flooding, stock movements etc.); and
- ▶ Provide access to technical expertise to explain information and receive feedback.

Chair and secretariat

The Chair will:

- ▶ Organise the agenda in tandem with the ARTC secretariat and the Committee; and
- ▶ Review draft minutes for approval.

The ARTC Secretariat will:

- ▶ Record and draft the minutes from each Committee meeting and provide to the Chair for review;
- ▶ Disseminate draft and approved minutes;
- ▶ Enquire as to status of assigned actions as per meeting minutes;
- ▶ Prepare and collate documents required for each Committee meeting;
- ▶ Support the Chair as required;
- ▶ Upload finalised minutes onto the website for viewing by interested parties. Note that published minutes may have confidential information removed; and
- ▶ Correspond with members out of session as required and manage Chair liaison with members.

The role of ARTC Secretariat will be serviced by either the ARTC Toowoomba office, or Brisbane HQ.

CONDUCT AND DISCLOSURES

Members must act with honesty, integrity and professionalism.

All nominees (and if appointed, members) must declare any real or perceived conflict of interest and no person (other than a Chair) may simultaneously serve as a member on more than one Committee (although they may nominate simultaneously for membership of more than one Committee or nominate for a Committee while serving as a member of another Committee).

Members must declare all 'real' or 'perceived' conflicts of interest which could be impacted or influenced by the Inland Rail project, including but not limited to:

- ▶ Business dealings
- ▶ Community interests
- ▶ Operational interests
- ▶ Commercial interests; and/or
- ▶ Landholder interests.

Disclosure about conflicts of interest must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

Breaches of Protocol

A breach of protocol includes failing to disclose a conflict of interest, consistent disruption of a meeting or disrespect towards other members.

Dissolution of the Committee

If it is deemed by Committee members, that the Committee is no longer required, the Chair must seek approval from ARTC to dissolve the Committee. Any request for dissolution must demonstrate why the Committee is no longer required.

ARTC holds the right to dissolve the Committee at any time, and will notify members in writing.

OPERATIONAL PROTOCOLS

Members will be invited to nominate topics or issues for discussion, as will the Project Team, through the Chair. Raised issues will need to be provided to the Secretariat for inclusion on the meeting agenda, and will be allocated a time limit to allow appropriate discussion within the meeting timeframe.

The Committee will meet at an appropriate place and time as notified to Committee members by the Chair. It is expected that the Committee will meet quarterly (every 12 weeks) on dates and places set out in advance, but may set meetings on a more frequent basis.

Extraordinary meetings may be called by the Chair if deemed necessary based on significant issues to be tabled and discussed, and will be done so with at least five (5) days written notice to all members.

The Chair will preside as Chairperson at every Committee meeting, unless due to unavailability, whereby the Chair may delegate their role in advance to another member.

The Chair may invite Elected Representatives or Government Officials to the Committee meetings as observers. The Chair may invite other persons on an ad-hoc basis to address the Committee on particular agenda items.

Meeting minutes will be taken by the ARTC Secretariat. The minutes will include attendance, apologies, declarations of interest and a record of topics discussed and assigned actions. Minutes will be reviewed and approved for circulation to members by ARTC and the Chair.

The Secretariat will circulate minutes via email to all members. All members must confirm accuracy of the minutes. Meeting minutes that require significant changes should be responded to in writing and forwarded to the Chair to be tabled for discussion at the next Committee meeting. Amendments of the minutes should be agreed to by members.

Approved meeting minutes are part of the formal report of each meeting from the Committee to ARTC and other interested parties. Once approved, the minutes are made available on the ARTC website. Any confidential information will be redacted from the minutes published on the ARTC website.

Meeting agendas will be approved by ARTC and the Chair prior to circulation. In general, committee meetings will be open to the public.

Information Dissemination

Members are encouraged to discuss issues and disseminate information about the project with the broader community they represent, including their specific interest groups where relevant.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION


It is not a requirement for the Committee to reach a consensus on issues tabled and discussed. Differing views will be noted and taken into consideration.

For significant issues that result in disruptive or disrespectful behaviour or where discussions are not making headway, the Chair will call for the meeting to be concluded, and will endeavour to set a process and timeframe for the issue to be resolved outside the Committee meeting format.

5. ENGINEERING SERVICES DEPARTMENT REPORTS

5.1 Avenue of Honour

Document Information

 Southern Downs REGIONAL COUNCIL	Report To: Special Council Meeting	
	Reporting Officer:	Meeting Date: 7 November 2017
	Manager Work Maintenance & Open Space	ECM Function No/s: 11.42.02/28.50

Recommendation

THAT Council endorse the proposed project to create an Avenue of Honour by augmenting and better managing the existing Robinias.

Report

Council received correspondence from Sue Johnson dated June 2017 requesting written support for a project entitled Avenue of Honour. The proposed Avenue of Honour project would pay tribute to all residents of Stanthorpe who have served in all conflicts around the world. The project consists of planting trees on both sides of High Street from the New England Highway intersection to the northern entrance to Stanthorpe. The proposal suggests that choosing Stanthorpe to create the Avenue of Honour would be appropriate as the areas around Stanthorpe were chosen as soldier settlement places after World War One.

Mrs Johnson claims that Stanthorpe is unique in Queensland to experience all four seasons, and by choosing a tree that changes colour in autumn would be appropriate and create a tourist attraction. The letter goes on to say the existing trees planted along High Street, known as Robinias, are not suitable as they are prone to disease and suckering.

The proposal is to remove the Robinias and replace them with Autumn Glory Maple, refer photo attached. Careful consideration needs to be given if a new species is to be planted. The Autumn Glory Maple would not be suitable as it reduces visibility for drivers and impacts adversely to pedestrian movement in narrow footpath width areas.

Trees that change colour in autumn are known as deciduous. The existing Robinias are a deciduous tree that change colour from a rich green to an almost florescent yellow. The total number of existing Robinias along High Street is 115. It should be noted that on the southern entrance to Stanthorpe there are over 100 deciduous Ornamental Pistachio trees which change colour from green to different shades of reds and oranges. Along Quart Pot Creek there are also hundreds of deciduous trees.

Council engaged an independent Arborist to provide advice on the existing Robinias. A copy of that report is attached. The conclusion of the Arborist report recommended better management of the existing trees, highlighting proper pruning and mulching techniques and more frequent watering. When the Arborist was questioned directly about the suitability of the Robinias they responded via email, a copy of which is also attached. In summary, the Arborist recommended if the existing Robinia trees were better managed, they are well suited for the location. Reference should be made to the attached photographs of the existing Robinias which support the suitability of the existing trees.

The Robinias are not more prone to disease than any other tree species.

After careful consideration of the Arborist report and acknowledgment of the 115 existing deciduous trees, a far more economical approach, should Council support the concept of the Avenue of Honour, would be to augment the existing trees.

The distance from the New England Highway to Davidi Street Intersection is 2400m. To create an avenue effect, it is suggested a maximum spacing of 20m would be necessary. Taking into account both sides of the road, a total of approximately 240 trees would be required. It is estimated that 10 of the existing Robinias would need immediate replacement. Therefore another 135 Robinias would be required to achieve an average spacing of 20m to High Street.

Also attached are copies of letters from 9 Stanthorpe based community groups, including the Stanthorpe RSL, which support the Avenue of Honour project.

Budget Implications

The proposal does not mention funding and does not give details of any fundraising carried out thus far. Nor is there any commitment from any community organisation to supply labour or materials.

The cost estimate as proposed by Mrs Johnson would be in the vicinity of \$80,000. It should be noted that two-thirds of this cost is to allow for steel mesh tree guards; estimated \$15,000 to remove all 115 existing Robinias; one-third of the cost would be attributable to traffic control.

If the existing Robinias were utilised to create the Avenue of Honour only another 135 trees would be required which would reduce the overall cost to \$42,000. Considerable savings could further be made if the intent of the proposal was for the community to provide labour and materials. Council may consider contributing the machinery component - to install 135 trees the estimated machinery cost would be \$8000.

To better manage the existing trees, ie increase water frequency, will also increase the demand on operational resources throughout the year.

Policy Consideration

Community Plan 1.11 Enhance "Gateway" to the Southern Downs by developing attractive town entrances fostering a sense of recognition, ownership and community pride.

Community Engagement

It is recommended that the general public be consulted regarding the details of the proposal.

Legislation/Local Law

Permission within Council to plant a tree in the road reserve is delegated to the Director of Engineering. As High Street is a State road, a permit would also be required from the Department of Transport & Main Roads.

Options

Council:

1. Endorse the proposed project to create an Avenue of Honour by augmenting and better managing the existing Robinias.
2. Endorse the proposed project to create an Avenue of Honour by removing the existing Robinias and replanting with another species of deciduous tree which is suitable for a road environment.
3. Does not endorse the Avenue of Honour project.

Please note that in both options 1 & 2 there are numerous financial variations depending on contributions from Council and the community.

Attachments

1. Letter from Sue Johnson [View](#)
2. Photograph Supplied by Sue Johnson - Autumn Glory Maple [View](#)
3. Arborist Report - Vinton Tree Services [View](#)
4. Email from Vinton Tree Services [View](#)
5. Photos showing the existing Robinias [View](#)
6. Letter of Support from Community Organisations based in Stanthorpe [View](#)

384 Amosfield Rd
STANTHORPE 4380

June 2017

Dear ,

Since settlement in the 1870s, members of the Stanthorpe community have served with other Australians in conflicts in which Australia has participated around the world. Few communities in Australia have such close associations as Stanthorpe has with one of those conflicts in particular. I refer of course to the soldier settlements of Amiens, Bapaume, Pozieres etc after WWI.

I feel a fitting tribute to all Stanthorpians who have served in world conflicts is my project to plant an "Avenue of Honour" at the northern entrance to the town of Stanthorpe. (This could be extended to the southern entrance.) Other communities do have such an avenue and yet Stanthorpe, with its strong historic connections, does not.

Stanthorpe is an iconic part of Queensland, being the only part of our state which truly enjoys the colourful aspects of the four seasons. Therefore it is envisioned that the Avenue of Honour would consist of trees which reflect this and thus exhibit colour change in autumn. (These could replace the existing yellow Robinias, which are prone to disease and suckering.)

I see this as a wonderful addition to our town and a chance to honour the 100th anniversary of the signing of the Armistice of 11/11/1918. My vision is to see the Avenue dedicated on this day (Remembrance Day) next year. Such a feature will become a statement for the Granite Belt and a tourist attraction in the autumn each year.

Statutory requirements will have to be met, along with Council permission, for the project to proceed, therefore community support is vitally important. I am asking for your organisation's tacit support (in the form of a letter) for this project.

Yours faithfully,

Sue Johnson
Project Initiator/Co-ordinator

Autumn Glory maples - Rhonda & John Hoffman's property.





18 September 2017.

David Webster
Team Leader Parks And Gardens
Southern Downs Regional Council, QLD.

Dear David

Re: *Robinia pseudoacacia*. High St, Stanthorpe, Queensland, Australia

I am pleased to submit this Report, following my inspection of the trees either side of High Street, Stanthorpe.

I hope you find this report satisfactory and should you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Mat Vinton

Robinia Pseudoacacia . High St Stanthorpe, QLD

Prepared by Vinton Tree Services 18.09.17

Tree Report



Client – Southern Downs Regional Council, QLD
Prepared for – David Webster, Team Leader Parks And Gardens
Prepared by- Vinton Tree Services

Robinia Pseudoacacia . High St Stanthorpe, QLD

Prepared by Vinton Tree Services 18.09.17

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	4
Methodology.....	5
Executive Summary.....	6
Observations.....	7-9
Discussion	10
Management Options.....	10
Conclusions.....	11
Glossary.....	11
References.....	12
Appendix	13
Disclaimer.....	14

1. Introduction

1.1 Instruction

Instruction was given by David Webster – Team Leader Parks And Gardens to provide an Arborist Report for the Robinia - *Robinia pseudoacacia* trees along the approach to Stranthorpe, Qld. This is a group report on overall health and vigor of all the Robinia trees, not as individual trees.

1.2 Information and Documents provided

I met Mick Mahoney of Southern Downs Regional Council, on the 13th of September 2017 who informed me of the trees past and current issues.

1.3 Scope of this report

This report is only concerned with the Robinia trees along High St from the intersection with the New England Hwy south into town. This report is to evaluate the current health of the trees. It takes no account of other trees, shrubs or groundcovers within the area unless stated otherwise.

1.4 Site Visit

I attended the site on the 13th of September 2017 to carry out a visual assessment of the site and trees. The weather was clear and fine. The observations were made from ground level with good visibility.

1.5 Site Description

This site is the road verge on both sides of the road, the current state of the ground is extremely dry. The trees are on mainly flat ground. Soil or pH samples were not taken at this time. I have not been informed or am aware of any recent changes to the immediate site near the trees mentioned.
There are some smaller Robinia trees which appear to have been replacement plantings conducted over the last few years.

1.6 Identification and Photographic Evidence

Trees have been identified and named, both common and botanical, to the best of my ability. The photographic evidence was taken at the time of inspection utilizing a Canon 500D DSLR Camera.

2. Methodology

2.1 Tree Assessment

The tree assessments were non-invasive; ground based visual inspections utilizing internationally accepted techniques and methods of hazard assessment. Recommendations contained within this report are based on the observations made at the time of inspection. Changes in the trees brought about by storm, fire, adverse weather events, accidental or deliberate damage, mismanagement, or by changes to the growing conditions through broader changes in the local area, may impact on the validity of the conclusions and further assessment may be required prior to implementation of the management recommendations. The tree works recommended do not imply that the trees will withstand adverse natural conditions (e.g. cyclone or drought) or other works carried out on or near them, including damage from construction or development activities. The report is not a guarantee, but a professional opinion of the current condition of the trees and appropriate management options.

2.2 Evaluation Procedure

The Evaluation Procedure is Visual Assessment which involves mechanical criteria and judgement of the trees biological state of health. Taking into account features such as foliage, bark condition, the presence of any fruiting bodies, mechanical defects and soundness. This evaluation was carried out from ground level.

3. Executive Summary

- The majority of the trees **display poor health** and appear to **have the onset of decay within the basal area** . **All trees appear to have** reached the end of their useful life.
- Incorrect pruning and mulching techniques have not helped the health and or vigor of the trees over the years.
- Dry conditions **are** compounding existing issues
- Removal and replacement with a new specie native **and suitable to the growing conditions of the** area **is** recommended .

4. Observations



Figure 1 - Tree showing poor health. Dry conditions.



Figure 2 - Tree showing collar damage due to mounded mulch or mechanical damage from mowers or vehicles.



Figure 3 - Tree showing poor health possibly due to lack of water, mounded mulch or mechanical damage from mowers or vehicles.



Figure 4 - Tree showing mounded mulch

Robinia Pseudoacacia . High St Stanthorpe, QLD

Prepared by Vinton Tree Services 18.09.17



Figure 5 - Tree showing poor pruning techniques. (Tree is not a Robinia but was noted whilst on site. Similar old pruning wounds are visible on the Robinias)

5. Discussion

- 5.1** The site has a lot of trees that are in poor health or decline. The trees that are within this report all require works. The decline of trees (especially within high use areas like footpaths and road verges), suffer from compaction, lack of nutrient and water, competition from weed species and poor management in some circumstances. A lot of health issues with trees, go unnoticed until a problem arises i.e. poor health.
- 5.2** The mulching currently in place around the existing trees needs to be placed so as not to contact or mound up around the base of the tree creating health issues ie. collar rot. Correct placement of mulch will be of major benefit to the overall health of the trees and soil composition. Mulching provides a protection layer and helps reduce the impact of compaction, mechanical damage ie. Mowers/snipers and assists in retaining moisture, also cooling the soil and tree roots.

Where possible all trees should be mulched at a depth of 150mm. The area mulched should be from the trunk (not against it) to the edge of the canopy at least. Aged forest mulch should be used.

6. Management Options/ Recommendations

- **Remove and stump grind older stressed trees.**
- **Replacement plant removals with suitable specie.**
- **Proactively prune existing smaller Robinia replacement trees which have been planted.**
- **Remaining Robinia trees are to be mulched to a depth of 150mm. The area mulched should be from the trunk (not against it) to the edge of the canopy/drip line at least. Aged forest mulch to be used.**
- **Trees placed onto a watering schedule.**
- **Once newly planted trees are established remaining Robinia trees removed and replanted as above.**
- **Implement works with workers working to Australian Standards AS 4373 – Pruning Amenity Trees. With all relevant Certificates of Currency.**
- **Other methods should be implemented for the overall health of the trees being retained. Aerating soils, mulching, formative pruning to AS4373 can all be of important assistance.**
- **If any queries arise please consult with a qualified and reputable Arborist.**

7. Conclusions

This is a great entry road to the town and there is a great opportunity to create an appealing treed entry.

The need for shade and greenery along road ways and footpaths is important.

The management of this vegetation is also very important.

The removal of the older, larger and weaker trees initially will help reduce the impact of the leaf debris, falling branches and failed trees whilst the newly planted trees establish.

Removal of dead trees is risk management in high target areas as well as an aesthetic issue.

It is recommended that a removal and replacement program be established, suitable trees selected for the area and an ongoing maintenance program of pruning, mulching and watering be implemented.

This ensures that there is an ongoing streetscape during transition to new specie.

8. Glossary

- **Australian Standards – Pruning of Amenity Trees AS 4373 - 2007** – the objective is to provide Arborists, tree workers, government bodies, property owners and contractors with a guide defining uniform tree pruning procedures and practices in order to minimize the adverse or negative impact of pruning on trees
- **Australian Standards – Protection of trees on development sites AS 4970 – 2009** – This standard provides guidance for arborists, architects, builders, engineers, land managers, landscape architects and contractors, planners building surveyors, those concerned with the care and protection of trees, and all others interested in integration between trees and construction.
- **Co-dominant stems/trunks** – Similar sized forked branches or trunks, but lacking normal branch union
- **Epicormic** – shoots which result from adventitious buds. This growth is fast growing, weakly attached which grows faster than normal growth and generally in an up-right form. They are a response to stress factors upon the tree.
- **Leader** – primary terminal shoot or trunk of tree
- **Removal** - cutting down of a tree
- **Lift/Crown raise** – Pruning of lower limbs are removed to good lateral growth or trunk union
- **Remedial prune** - Removal of dead-wood, diseased and/or dying growth. Crossing limbs.
- **DBH** – diameter of trunk, measured at 1m above ground.
- **Branch attachment** – structural linkage of branch or stem
- **Included bark** – Pattern of development at branch junctions where bark is turned inward rather than pushed out
- **Compartmentalization** – Physiological process which creates the chemical and mechanical boundaries that act to limit the spread of disease and decay organisms

9. References

Queensland Museum 2003. *Wild Plants of Greater Brisbane* – A Queensland Museum Guide. Matheny, N.P and Clark, J.R 1994.

A Photographic Guide to the Evaluation of Hazard Trees in Urban Areas – 2nd Edition International Society of Arboriculture. Lonsdale, D 2008.

Principles of Tree Hazard Assessment and Management – Forestry Commission. Mattheck, C and Breloer, H 2005.

Body Language of Trees: a Handbook for Failure Analysis – The Stationary Office Books Great Britain Standards Australian 2007.

Australian Standard 4373-2007 Pruning of Amenity Trees – Standards Association of Australia Standards Australia 2009.

10. Appendix

10.1 Qualifications and experience of Mat Vinton

I have based this report on my site observations and the provided information made available at the time of inspection. I have come to the recommendations in light of my experience and tertiary qualifications in arboriculture.

Diploma in Arboriculture Cert V

Practical Experience

I have over 15 years of experience within the arboricultural industry, covering all work practices.

11. Disclaimer

This report only covers identifiable defects and issues present at the time of inspection. Author accepts no responsibility or can be held liable for any structural defects or unforeseen event/weather conditions that may occur after the time of the inspection and assessment. Unless specifically mentioned, this report will only be concerned with issues above ground and are undertaken visually. Care has been taken to provide information that is based on sound arboriculture practices and standards. The Author accepts no liability for actions undertaken by other third parties in undertaking any of the arboriculture work as recommended.

Chris Whitaker

From: Mat Vinton <mat@vintontreeservices.com.au>
Sent: Friday, 20 October 2017 10:36 AM
To: Chris Whitaker
Subject: Suitable species

Good morning Chris,

In response to the questions raised regarding the suitability of the Robina species, this specie is suited quite well to the area inspected as can be seen with existing trees and their age. Conditions have been quite hard over the last few years and all specie have struggled at one time or another. I can recommended that this specie be maintained to tie in with existing streets tree scape.

The continued use of this specie in this location would also be a cost effective one as a replacement program could consist of an implemented as and when required replacement program with trees being replaced on a required basis only and maintain continuity.

Cheers

Mat Vinton Dip ARB
Brisbane Manager
Vinton Tree Service
Mob. 0407657441
Office. 07 32080770
Fax. 07 32080334
Email: mat@vintontreeservices.com.au
Web: <http://www.vintontreeservices.com.au>







Stanthorpe RSL Sub Branch

Returned & Services League of Australia
(Queensland Branch)
Stanthorpe Sub Branch Inc.
PO Box 887
Stanthorpe Qld 4380
stanrsl@halenet.com.au
abn 16302801559
07 46 81 00 47



Friday, 18th August 2017

To whom it may concern

I refer to the proposal by Sue Johnson, Project Initiator/Coordinator for the "Avenue of Honour" tribute to all Stanthorpians who have served or have close associations with those who served in past conflicts.

The Returned and Service's League of Australia, Stanthorpe Sub Branch, fully supports the above mentioned proposal. We believe that this new initiative is a wonderful way to acknowledge the fallen, as the planting of these new trees is reminiscent of the Tree Planting Programme work done by the Returned Soldiers League back in the late 1930's up at the Stanthorpe Soldier's Memorial site.

Planting of these trees in the northern entrance of Stanthorpe will not only be aesthetically pleasing but will gain a positive impact in future Remembrance Day activities.

*Signed for and on behalf of the Returned & Services League of Australia
(Queensland Branch) Stanthorpe Sub Branch Inc.*

Thomas P. Cavanagh

Secretary

Miss Caroline Belmont
Secretary
Diggers Garden Group Inc.
P. O. Box 1019
Stanthorpe
Queensland 4380

21 July 2017

Dear Sue,

Re: Proposed Project for the creation of an "Avenue of Honour".

Thank you for your letter dated June 2017, which I presented to the Diggers Garden Group committee during our monthly meeting yesterday.

Your proposed project to plant an "Avenue of Honour" at the northern entrance to the town of Stanthorpe was met with both heartfelt appreciation, and considered by each of our members to hold the potential to act as a very fitting living memorial to all those who participated in the conflicts that occurred since the 1870s, and perhaps in particular to the soldier settlements established after World War 1, three of which were Amiens, Bapaume, and Pozieres.

What better way to honour the 100th Anniversary of the signing of the Armistice of 11th November 1918. And offer the soldiers' contemporary family members, residents and visitors a place to reflect on the true value of the memorial, and the town's historical past.

In addition too, it was felt that the idea of planting trees that change colour in autumn would not only enhance the atmosphere of the town for the residents, but offer potential business opportunities to the local motels and businesses. Whereas at present tourists are likely to remain on the Highway as they travel to Tenterfield for an autumn break. With both towns offering the option to engage with and explore autumn's nature, combined with country facilities, Stanthorpe's historical museum, art galleries, wineries, etcetera, attracting a larger number of long weekend visitors, and those looking for a week's holiday, was recognised.

Lastly, we would like to thank you for drawing your proposal to our attention, and inviting us to share our views with you.

With our warmest wishes for your endeavours to honour all those who served in past conflicts.

Yours sincerely,

Caroline M Belmont
Secretary to
Diggers Garden Group Inc.

Mrs Sue Johnson
384 Amosfield Road
Stanthorpe
Queensland 4380



PO Box 926
Stanthorpe Qld 4380
Secretary's:-
Ph: 07 4683 2128
Mob: 0427 880 009
Email: ppcorvus@bigpond.com

Sue Johnson

384 Amosfield Road

Stanthorpe.4380

Dear Sue,

Your correspondence was tabled at our general meeting on 21-6-2017 and was met with much enthusiasm.

It is with pleasure that we support the "AVENUE OF HONOUR" project.

Yours faithfully

Paul Crowe

Hon Secretary



President : Stephen Tancred
Secretary : Tony Heading
Postal Address: PO Box 139, Stanthorpe Q4380
Email: stanthorperotary@gmail.com
Web: www.stanthorperotary.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/stanthorperotary/

6th June 2017

Mrs S. Johnson
384 Amosfield Rd
Stanthorpe, Q 4380

Rotary support for Avenue of Honour

Dear Sue,

This letter is to offer support to the Avenue of Honour tree planting project you are proposing.

The Rotary Club of Stanthorpe applauds any efforts to beautify our town, especially with the signature deciduous trees that are distinct to our climate. Our Club has also made links recently with the Rotary Club of Amiens in France, and some members plan to travel to Amiens and surrounding battlefield towns in France in April 2018 to commemorate the end of WWI.

If your organisation can get the necessary Council approvals to develop an Avenue of Honour it would be a welcome link to Australia's past service and will further beautify our town.

Best of luck with the project.

Yours sincerely,

STEPHEN TANCRED
Rotary Club President 2016-2017

Telephone:(Stephen Mobile) 0407 762 888
(Tony Mobile) 0488 769 119



ROTARY
SERVING
HUMANITY



STANTHORPE TRAINING CENTRE INC

Cnr Short & Connor Streets • PO Box 135 • Stanthorpe QLD 4380

Phone: (07) 4681 2466 • Fax: (07) 4681 4613

E-mail st35108@bigpond.net.au



Tuesday 26 June 2017

Ms Sue Johnson
384 Amosfield Road
STANTHORPE 4380

Dear Sue,

What a wonderful suggestion and one our organisation would wholeheartedly support.

The type of trees you have suggested, deciduous with autumn colour would be most appropriate. In particular they would be the same trees which grow in that part of the world where our soldiers were killed. So trees suited to our cold climate to honour the men we lost as well as a reminder of where they died.

In addition an attractive avenue of autumn colour would both brighten up our towns' main entrance and serve as an additional attraction to our autumn/winter visitors.

It has been suggested that the new trees might be planted between the existing trees but a metre or so to the rear. This would give the new plantings a chance to develop while the SDRC decide when to remove the existing unsuitable Robinias, if they agree with your project. If the Robinias are true to form they may die of natural causes as the one in my garden has.

Perhaps SDRC will see the merit of your planned project and the support you have received and remove them to allow your proposed planting to proceed in their place, or your group could offer to remove them. They recently agreed to and allowed many autumn trees to be supplied and planted by a service club either side of one of the paths beside our creek, so they are not adverse to tree planting.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Carol Parkinson".

Carol Parkinson
Secretary



15th June 2017

To Whom it May Concern,

After a discussion, the members of the Granite Belt U3A Inc. University of the Third Age (U3A) fully supports the idea presented to us by Sue Johnson, the Project Initiator and Co-ordinator of an "Avenue of Honour" of trees to be planted along the northern entrance to Stanthorpe, as a mark of respect to our fallen soldiers, sailors and airmen.

We look forward to seeing this project come to fruition.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Carol van Klaveren'.

Carol van Klaveren
Secretary – Granite Belt U3A Inc.

University of the Third Age
Granite Belt Inc.

PO Box 250, Stanthorpe Qld 4380
E-mail: u3agb@granitenet.com.au



Lions Club of Stanthorpe Inc.

President John Smales

PO Box 158
Stanthorpe
Qld 4380

Secretary Dan Cuthbert

Phone 0419 784 727

Email dc@powertynan.com.au

Sue Johnson
Project Coordinator
100th Anniversary of Armistice
384 Amosfield Road
Stanthorpe QLD
4380

Dear Sue,

On behalf of the Stanthorpe Lions Club we would like to offer our support for your upcoming celebration on 11/11/2018 (Armistice Day).

We congratulate you on the organising of the event which is a great vision.

We would like to assist in any way we can in your building on the event.

The Lions club fully supports and encourages you in this endeavour.

Regards,

Dan Cuthbert
Secretary
30/06/2017



P.O. Box 542, STANTHORPE. 4380
Australian Business Number 83 052 040 381

12 June, 2017

Sue Johnson
384 Amosfield Rd
Stanthorpe Q 4380

Dear Sue,

Thank you for your letter to our Club regarding support for your envisaged project.

The Stanthorpe Garden Club, at its recent committee meeting, discussed your request. The club is more than happy to support your request of an "Avenue of Honour", which indeed will become a feature statement for the Granite Belt and a tourist attraction in autumn each year. The only concern is the mention of removing the existing yellow robinias. We as a Club were not in favour of their removal, as they could most likely be incorporated, as is, into your anticipated project.

We wish you all the best with this project.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Gina Marino", is written over the printed name.

Gina Marino
Secretary
Stanthorpe Garden Club
PO Box 542
Stanthorpe Q 4380

Quart Pot Quilters
Stanthorpe 4380
27th July, 2017

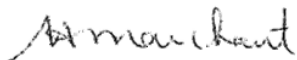
Sue Johnson
Project Initiator/Co-ordinator
384 Amosfield Road
Stanthorpe 4380

Dear Sue,

Your letter regarding the project for the "Avenue of Honour" at the northern entrance to Stanthorpe was discussed at our recent AGM.

Quart Pot Quilters supports the concept of the "Avenue of Honour" for the town.

We hope that the project goes ahead in some form as it would further enhance Stanthorpe and become another point of interest for residents and visitors alike.



Hilary Marchant
Secretary
Quart Pot Quilters

