

## 5.7. APPLICATION FOR BUILDING BETTER REGIONS FUNDING

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**DEPARTMENT:** CEO Unit - *Connected Communities*

### RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolves to:

1. support an application under the current round of the Commonwealth Government 'Building Better Regions' Fund - Infrastructure Projects Stream, for \$1,125,000 towards the construction of the Noah Creek Bridge Renewal; and
2. contribute 25% (\$375,000) towards the project costs.

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to confirm Council's commitment to apply for \$1,125,000 in grant funding under the Commonwealth Government's Building Better Regions program to contribute towards the delivery and project management of the Noah Creek Bridge Renewal. The funding guidelines indicates the site is considered 'remote' and Council will be eligible for 75% of the total project cost in grant funding. With a total project cost of \$1,500,000, Council contribution of 25% will be \$375,000.

### BACKGROUND

In January 2016 Council completed a Level 2 Bridge Inspection of all bridges and major culverts across the transport network. Noah Creek Bridge was inspected and was found to be in Condition State 4 (1 being in good condition and 5 being in poor condition).

Noah Creek Bridge is a four span, one lane timber girder bridge on Cape Tribulation Road over Noah Creek. The bridge was refurbished in 2012 by a contractor experienced in timber restorations. The timber girders have all been modified using resin injection and anti-rot chemicals however the girders appear to still be suffering from decay. One of the girders snapped in 2014 and has been put back in place with a steel splint. The bridge has been overtopped multiple times since 2012 and the longevity of the structure in its current form is questionable.

### COMMENT

The aim of the project is to renew the existing bridge to ensure access to the north is maintained into the future, stimulating economic growth and providing a vital transport link.

This will be achieved through a structural assessment of the substructure (piles and headstock) to determine the useful life and construction methodology for the renewal of the superstructure (using concrete girders and decking).

This project has been submitted for funding as a Design & Construct delivery model with the funding to be expended by 31 December 2019. It is estimated that the project will cost in the order of \$1,500,000 which includes hydraulic assessment of the creek, structural assessment of the existing piles & headstocks, design of a new girder, deck and wearing

surface system, WTMA & DEHP permits, traffic management during construction and project management.

The funding guidelines indicate the site is considered 'remote' and therefore if the application is successful Council will be eligible to receive 75% of the total project costs in grant funding. Council will need to contribute 25% (\$375,000) from the Capital Works budget.

Due to time constraints officers were unable to submit a report prior to the closing date of Tuesday 28 February 2017, however Councillors were briefed on the proposed application at the workshop held on Wednesday 22 February 2017 where Councillors indicated support for the application to be submitted.

## **PROPOSAL**

Local Governments and not for profit organisations are eligible to apply for funding under the Building Better Regions Fund.

There are two funding streams available under the Building Better Regions Fund being the Community Investments and Infrastructure Projects. Eligible projects under the Infrastructure Stream include Capital works projects that involve the construction of new infrastructure, or the upgrade or an extension of existing infrastructure.

Noah Creek Bridge is a vital transport link ensuring communities north of the Daintree River are able to remain connected to services, employment, education and economic opportunities such as the tourism industry that promotes the Daintree National Park experience.

Council has submitted an application under Infrastructure Projects which closed on Tuesday 28 February 2017.

## **FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

If selected as one of the projects to be funded, Council will need to have resolved to enter into an agreement with the Commonwealth Government to deliver the project. It is estimated that Council's contribution will be 25% (\$375,000) of the overall project costs of \$1,500,000.

## **RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

Council completed a Level 2 Bridge Inspection of all bridges and major culverts across the Shire's transport network in January 2016. Noah Creek Bridge was inspected and was found to be in Condition State 4 (1 being in good condition and 5 being in poor).

Should the bridge fail it has potential catastrophic implications to both social and economic sustainability of communities located north of the Daintree River.

## **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

**Economic:** There is significant reliance upon the continued maintenance and upgrading of the transport network in the north of the Shire due to the reliance upon tourism as a source of income.

**Environmental:** Renewal of the bridge at the appropriate interception time ensures that the resources used in bridge construction achieves the best resource life possible and so helps reduce the use of non-renewable resources.

**Social:** The provision of a suitable transport network throughout the Shire is essential to the connectivity of the communities located in the north of the Shire.

## **CORPORATE/OPERATIONAL PLAN, POLICY REFERENCE**

This report has been prepared in accordance with the following:

### **Corporate Plan 2014-2019 Initiatives:**

#### **Theme 5 - Governance**

*5.1.1 - Establish and develop long term financial, resource and infrastructure planning to ensure ongoing capacity to fund operations and capital works programs.*

*5.1.3 - Monitor and regularly review procurement practices to ensure legislative compliance and "value for money".*

## **COUNCIL'S ROLE**

Council can play a number of different roles in certain circumstances and it is important to be clear about which role is appropriate for a specific purpose or circumstance. The implementation of actions will be a collective effort and Council's involvement will vary from information only through to full responsibility for delivery.

The following areas outline where Council has a clear responsibility to act:

**Asset-Owner** Meeting the responsibilities associated with owning or being the custodian of assets such as infrastructure.

## **CONSULTATION**

**Internal:** Information regarding the proposed funding application was presented to Councillors at the Councillors' workshop held on Wednesday 22 February 2016.

**External:** Nil