

## **5.7. BRIDGES RENEWAL PROGRAM ROUND 5 - WARNERS BRIDGE AND ANICHS BRIDGE**

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

**That Council:**

- 1. Accepts the funding offer of \$500,000.00 (GST Exc) from the Australian Government's Bridges Renewal Program Round Five for the Warners Bridge Replacement project;**
- 2. Commits the required 50% co-contribution of \$500,000.00 (GST Exc) in 2021-22 Budget towards the Warners Bridge Replacement project;**
- 3. Accepts the funding offer of \$440,000.00 (GST Exc) from the Australian Government's Bridges Renewal Program Round Five for the Anichs Bridge Replacement project;**
- 4. Commits the required 50% co-contribution of \$440,000.00 (GST Exc) in 2021-22 Budget towards the Anichs Bridge Replacement project;**
- 5. Delegates authority under section 257 of the *Local Government Act 2009* to the Chief Executive Officer to determine and finalise any matters associated with the above matter.**

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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Council submitted two funding applications to the Bridges Renewal Project Round Five to replace Anichs and Warners Bridges. Both proposals were successful, receiving offers of funding. Under the terms and conditions of the funding, documentation is required to be returned to the funder by 30 November 2020.

This report seeks Council's commitment to allocate funds in the 2021-22 Budget for the 50% co-contribution.

### **BACKGROUND**

The Australian Government's Bridges Renewal Program (BRP) provides up to 50 percent of the total cost of eligible projects to enhance access for local communities and facilitate higher productivity vehicle access.

To be eligible under Round Five of BRP:

- Proponents must be a state/territory government, or local government entity eligible for [Roads to Recovery](#) funding. (Private entities are not permitted to apply);

- The bridge/s must be publicly accessible;
- Proponents must provide an engineer's report (not more than three years old) and a letter from the Council agreeing to match Australian Government funding, as evidence they are ready to proceed;
- In the case of proposals seeking funding for the repair/replacement of bridges affected by natural disasters, a current engineer's report detailing the level of damage and potential impact on the community must be provided;
- Proponents must contribute at least 50 percent of costs – which can comprise state/territory/council and/or private sector funding, including funding from other Australian Government funding programs including Roads to Recovery, and Financial Assistance Grants;
- Construction must not have commenced, or be due to commence, and tenders must not have been awarded. Construction means actual on ground works at the project site and/or the fabrication of major components off site. In the case of natural disasters, clearance of damaged infrastructure is not being considered commencement of construction where it directly relates to remediation proposals.
- Construction prior to Departmental advice that your project can commence may result in funding for the project being withdrawn by the Department;
- Construction must be scheduled to start within 12 months after the signing of a Project Approval Instrument and be completed no later than 24 months after the signing of the Project Approval Instrument.

Round Five opened 17 March 2020 and closed 29 May 2020. On 28 October 2020 Council received correspondence advising of successful funding for the two projects submitted.

## COMMENT

Funding submissions were accompanied by letters from the Chief Executive Officer confirming Council's Ten-Year Capital Works Program included Warners and Anichs Bridges, allocating \$80,000.00 each (GST Exc) for detailed designs in 2020-21, funded by Council, and \$500,000.00 (GST Exc) and \$440,000.00 (GST Exc) respectively, for contributions towards construction costs in 2021-22.

A formal Council resolution is to be provided with the signed funding agreement confirming Council's agreement to match Australian Government Funding.

Warners Bridge is a single lane dual-purpose timber bridge has a 10t load limit, with sugar cane trains, harvesters, tractors and cane haulout machinery, motorists and cyclists using the bridge. It is located on Warners Road, Cassowary. While use of the bridge may continue for public access within the load limit, the load limit imposes limits to heavy vehicle movements.

The proposed new bridge downstream will have an increased load limit with reduced costs associated with maintenance and debris removal after floods and annual cane harvesting season.

Anichs Bridge is a single lane, one span steel girder dual purpose bridge with a 13t load limit, with sugar cane trains, motorists, adventure tourism and cyclists using the bridge. It is located on Finlayvale Road, Finlayvale. While use of the bridge may continue for public access within the load limit, the current load limit imposes limits to heavy vehicle movements.

The increased load and safety of the new combined use bridge (road and rail) will ensure the sugar cane growers located beyond the bridge will be able to have their sugar cane transported to the local sugar mill.

Harvesting contractors will be able to safely transport heavy machinery such as cane harvesters, tractors and haulage across the creek. Tourist buses and coaches will have safer access to the tourism accommodation resort upstream from the bridge.

## PROPOSAL

The proposal is for Council to:

1. Accept the funding offer of \$500,000.00 (GST Exc) from the Australian Government's Bridges Renewal Program Round Five for the Warners Bridge Replacement project;
2. Commit the required 50% co-contribution of \$500,000.00 (GST Exc) in 2021-22 Budget towards the Warners Bridge Replacement project;
3. Accept the funding offer of \$440,000.00 (GST Exc) from the Australian Government's Bridges Renewal Program Round Five for the Anichs Bridge Replacement project;
4. Commit the required 50% co-contribution of \$440,000.00 (GST Exc) in 2021-22 Budget towards the Anichs Bridge Replacement project;
5. Delegate authority under section 257 of the *Local Government Act 2009* to the Chief Executive Officer to determine and finalise any matters associated with the above matter.

## FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Funds for Council's required 50% co-contribution have not been adopted in the current or future budgets. A formal Council resolution needs to be provided with the signed funding agreement confirming Council's agreement to match Australian Government Funding.

## RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Construction of the projects must commence within 12 months of the signing of the offers of funding and be completed no later than 24 months from the signing of the offers of funding.

Grant payments will be made on the achievement of project milestones.

Project risks will be mitigated through the systematic application of internal project management systems. Project management will be the responsibility of a Council Officer, supported by officers from finance, procurement and corporate communications, to ensure all conditions of the funding agreement are met.

## SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

**Economic:** Bridge construction will provide direct and indirect employment for contractors and suppliers. The construction of new bridges will ensure on-going community access for the residents beyond the bridge to Mossman and Port Douglas, the commercial business districts within the Douglas Shire, as well as improved safety for motorists, cyclists and heavy vehicle operators. Annual bridge inspections have indicated continual dilapidation of the bridges.

The increased load and safety of the new bridges will ensure harvesting contractors will be able to safely transport heavy machinery such as cane harvesters, tractors and haulage across the creeks. Anichs Bridge is also an important transport link for tourist accommodation and adventure businesses.

**Environmental:** The projects comply with environmental and industry standards. New single clear span bridge will reduce influences from debris being caught against existing multi span structures.

**Social:** Safe bridges are integral to continued community connectivity and access.

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

This report has been prepared in accordance with the following:

### **Corporate Plan 2019-2024 Initiatives:**

#### **Theme 2 - Fostering Sustainable Economic Growth**

A robust economy is at the heart of a thriving community and enables investment in environmental protection. While our remoteness is a key attribute, it also presents challenges for attracting new business and investment. We must also meet the challenges of fierce competition in the tourism sector. Council will partner with industry to build, diversify and promote the Douglas economy. Council will design and deliver infrastructure, strategies and services that support the local economy and businesses.

**Goal 1 - We will build appropriate infrastructure and deliver services that connect and support businesses.**

#### **Theme 4 - Inclusive Engagement, Planning and Partnerships**

In delivering for our communities, economy and environment, Douglas Shire will ensure open and transparent engagement and communication. We will develop robust strategic plans and we will partner with our community and key stakeholders.

**Goal 3 - We will recognise the critical role that our partners play in planning and delivering vital programs and services.**

#### **Theme 5 - Robust Governance and Efficient Service Delivery**

Strong governance and financial management are the foundations of the way in which Council will conduct its business and implement the initiatives of the Corporate Plan.

**Goal 1 - We will conduct Council business in an open and transparent manner with strong oversight and open reporting.**

**Goal 2 - We will put the customer at the centre of our service delivery and process improvement as we deliver efficient and appropriate services based on community expectations.**

**Goal 3 - We will make sound financial decisions by ensuring robust strategic planning, financial management and reporting.**

## 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:

<b>Advocate</b>	Council makes representation on behalf of the community on important issues, funding opportunities, projects and programs. Council will use its influence to seek the best outcomes for the community.
<b>Agent</b>	On occasion, Council delivers services or builds infrastructure on behalf of other levels of government or organisations.
<b>Builder/Owner</b>	Council makes a significant investment every year in the infrastructure that underpins the Shire through its capital works program. Council will manage its assets with appropriate frameworks and deliver its projects through robust project management.
<b>Custodian</b>	Council owns and manages infrastructure, facilities, reserves, resources and natural areas. In fulfilling its role as custodian, Council will be mindful of the community, the economy, the environment, and good governance.
<b>Facilitator</b>	Council often brings stakeholders together on important issues, projects or for service delivery. In this role, Council can act as a mediator, connector, collaborator or initiator.
<b>Service Provider</b>	Council provides many services to the community from roads and waste services to libraries and recreational facilities. Services evolve over time and it is the Council's mission to ensure that these services are appropriate, delivered efficiently, and designed with the customer at the centre.

## CONSULTATION

**Internal:** Management Team, Grants Officer, Community Liaison Officer

**External:** Infrastructure consultants (for load assessments and condition inspection reports), sugar mill representatives, property owners, coach company, accommodation provider, adventure business

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Property owners affected by Anichs Bridge were advised of the proposed project, with further consultation to be undertaken prior to commencement advising of the altered traffic route during construction.

Sugar mill and bus representatives were also informed of the proposal. Further consultation will be carried out with harvesting and tour operators prior to construction.

Warners Bridge at the start of the Cassowary Valley, services all of the cane farms in that valley. Community engagement identified concerns the bridge could collapse under the weight of a train pulling loaded bins, a cane harvester, or loaded haul-out machines. Also, wheel path boards are not wide enough for car tires, and can be slippery in dry and wet conditions.

Letters of support accompanied both funding proposals.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Nil