

6.01. NOTICE OF MOTION - DAINTREE FERRY NORTHERN APPROACH TOILETS

COUNCILLOR: Cr Terry Melchert

NOTICE OF MOTION:

I hereby give Notice of my intention to move the following Motion at the Council meeting scheduled for Tuesday 23rd February 2016:-

"That Council move immediately utilising funding available from the Daintree Ferry Fund to acquire and install a two to three pedestal demountable toilet, including pump out facilities at the northern bank ferry crossing, and of a design similar to the southern side toilet facilities. The facility to be installed in the vicinity of the current "portaloo"."

BACKGROUND:

The need for an upgrade of the northern toilets from "portaloo" to something more aesthetically pleasing and more comfortable for users has had broad community support for many years [sic] and this continued at the recent Daintree Community meeting.

This facility will provide a good short to medium term solution and being relocatable can be moved prior to flood times, and avoids concerns about septic tanks or sewerage treatment. The cost to Council in terms of cleaning and pump out would be no more than the current "portaloo".

The facility could also be moved around to meet any future development of the Northern approach, which at best is probably a couple of years off given the Environmental and other approvals which will be required for work to be undertaken.

The following advice from Mr Chris Leach I believe summarises community opinion:-

"Thank you and the other councillors for attending the forum held at the Cow Bay Hotel this morning and listening to community views and concerns.

I would like to suggest the following based on information that was given at today's forum and I ask if you could put my proposal to the other councillors for consideration if appropriate.

"Temporary" Portaloo Toilets – North Side Daintree River Crossing.

The Daintree Gateway concept is a potentially great long term strategy to improve the north bank of the Daintree River and provide a permanent solution to the toilet problem. However, in the short to medium term, visitors to the area will still be left with a horrible last memory of their visit to this iconic destination if they are unfortunate enough to need to use one of the two 'portaloo' toilets, which is highly likely in peak season with traffic queues due to the number of visitors.

A better alternative to the 'portaloo' toilets currently situated on the north shore of the Daintree River would be demountable toilets located in exactly the same place as the existing portaloo toilets. This would be an immediate fix to the problem, with presumably very similar operating costs to be pumped out.

The demountable toilets would be a vastly improved temporary solution that can be installed in the short to medium term without any extra carparks, long term traffic flow planning or other long term concerns as they could easily be moved to a long term site once the best location has been established.

The Utilisation Of Daintree Ferry Reserve Funds document clearly states: "Provision of public facilities immediately adjacent to and on both sides of the river", which would enable the new demountable toilets to be funded almost instantly – councillors agreeing!

Portaloos style toilets like those currently utilised on the North bank of the river should be kept for their intended purpose like building sites, festivals and other truly short term uses.

Please consider replacing the portaloos with a demountable(s) and help this region keep its good reputation as a place to visit and spend their tourist dollars rather than a \$H!T experience."

It would be great to move this project along so the facility is in use for the forthcoming tourist season.

OFFICER'S COMMENT:

In this past year Council has constructed four new toilets including an accessible toilet on the southern side of the river, an initiative that has been well regarded and supported by the community and tourism businesses. Council has also renovated toilets at Thornton Beach and will soon have constructed new toilet facilities at Cow Bay.

While the portaloos on the northern side of the river require replacement, this work and cost has not been previously considered by Council in formulating the 2015/16 Operational Plan and Annual Budget. As Council is in the Caretaker period prior to the quadrennial local government elections, to make a decision without thorough investigation of options and effect on budget has the potential to be perceived as ad hoc, with no assessment of value for money. A rushed decision without proper assessment could result in ratepayer funds being wasted, and at worst, could see hastily erected toilets demolished, all of which would impact adversely on Council's reputation. This is regardless whether the cost is above or below the threshold of a major policy decision as defined by section 90B of the *Local Government Act 2009*.

Staff have commenced investigations into options available, including costs and report to Council in April 2016 with recommendations. If work is to be scheduled in the 2015/16 financial year, the report to Council will formalise the 2015/16 budget variation.