

**Item: 4.1 SPORTSMAN'S CREEK LAWRENCE BRIDGE REPLACEMENT**

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**REPORT SUMMARY**

The Council has an important role to make representations to support the people of Lawrence community who for some years have been seeking a new bridge over Sportsman's Creek at Lawrence.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council support the Lawrence community and make representations to the Minister for Roads that he honour the Government's April 2000 commitment to a new concrete bridge on Sportsman's Creek at Lawrence on either the Rutland or Grafton Street alignment and that the RTA be responsible for annual provision of funding to effect future required maintenance to the existing Heritage bridge, which Council suggest should eventually become for pedestrian traffic only.

**BACKGROUND**

The Sportsman's Creek Bridge on MR 152 at Lawrence village is a timber truss bridge and is classified as a National Bridge under the care, control and Management of the RTA. The Director Engineering Services advises that the condition of the bridge is fair but the approach spans and abutments are in poor condition. Considerable expenditure has been incurred to keep the bridge trafficable with no load limits.

In 1998 the RTA advised that replacement of the bridge was to occur. The former Maclean Shire led concept investigations and RTA commissioned a Heritage study of the existing bridge. Public meetings commenced in October 1998 and in April 2000 Hon Harry Woods announced replacement of the Sportsman Creek Bridge with a concrete bridge known as Option C on Grafton Street alignment.

Former Maclean Council then effected investigation and design for the new bridge and in May 2002 completed a draft EIS. In December 2002 Hon Harry Woods announced that the Government had decided to upgrade the existing timber bridge. The RTA then took control of the process, called a public meeting which then formed a Community Working Group in March 2003. In December 2003 the former Copmanhurst Council included the existing bridge on a Draft Heritage LEP.

**ISSUES**

The RTA still proposes to upgrade the existing bridge and this was confirmed in May 2005 at a meeting I participated in with Mr Peter Collins. The RTA is presently undertaking a Conservation Management Plan, Structural Assessments and a full Heritage Study as the bridge is on the RTA Register as being of State Significance.

Representations to me, including a recent meeting at Lawrence accompanied by the Director Engineering Services, clearly indicate that the Lawrence community desires a new bridge. This is the primary reason for presenting this minute to Council. Support has been sought by the community from Steve Cansdell MP who has obtained a quotation from Richmond Council to construct a new bridge on the Grafton Street alignment.

The obvious benefits of a new concrete bridge is that it would meet traffic needs for the future, meet the community's desire, satisfy heritage issues and would present minimum cost to Clarence Valley Council.

### OPTIONS

I am advised by the Director Engineering Services that it has repeatedly been suggested to the RTA that the best option for a solution would be: -

1. Construct a new two lane concrete bridge including approaches on either the Rutland or Grafton street alignment.
2. Convert the existing bridge for pedestrian traffic only (with Heritage Council approval) which should reduce costs for the RTA.

### FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Council's financial interests need to be protected in that if a new bridge is constructed and becomes Council's responsibility it would be unsatisfactory for Council to be required to also maintain the Heritage Bridge. Any new bridge decision would need to ensure that future maintenance funding requirements of the Heritage Bridge should be the responsibility of the RTA

IAN TILEY  
MAYOR