



REGIONAL COUNCIL

SPECIAL MEETING OF COUNCIL

AGENDA

11 MARCH 2014



SPECIAL MEETING
AGENDA
11 MARCH 2014

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Item Subject	Page No.
Table of Contents	2
1. Leave of Absence	3
1.1 Leave of Absence	3
2. Declaration of any Material Personal Interests/Conflicts of Interest by Councillors and Senior Council Officers.....	4
3. Executive Office Reports	5
3.1 Emergency Management Fire and Resuce Levy	5
3.2 Toowoomba Second Range Crossing	8
4. Items for information	9



SPECIAL MEETING
AGENDA
11 MARCH 2014

1. LEAVE OF ABSENCE

1.1 Leave of Absence

Date: 11 March 2014
Author: Jason Bradshaw, Executive Manager Governance & Performance
Responsible Officer: Jason Bradshaw, Executive Manager Governance & Performance
File No: Formal Papers

Officer's Recommendation

THAT Leave of Absence be granted to Cr Pingel and Cr Friend due to prior commitments.

2. DECLARATION OF ANY MATERIAL PERSONAL INTERESTS/CONFLICTS OF INTEREST BY COUNCILLORS AND SENIOR COUNCIL OFFICERS

2.1 Declaration of Material Personal Interest on any Item of Business

Pursuant to Section 172 of the *Local Government Act 2009*, a councillor who has a material personal interest in an issue to be considered at a meeting of the local government, or any of its committees must –

- (a) inform the meeting of the councillor's material personal interest in the matter; and
- (b) leave the meeting room (including any area set aside for the public), and stay out of the meeting room while the matter is being discussed and voted on.

2.2 Declaration of Conflict of Interest on any Item of Business

Pursuant to Section 173 of the *Local Government Act 2009*, a councillor who has a real or perceived conflict of interest in a matter to be considered at a meeting of the local government, or any of its committees must inform the meeting about the councillor's personal interest the matter and if the councillor participates in the meeting in relation to the matter, how the councillor intends to deal with the real or perceived conflict of interest.



SPECIAL MEETING
AGENDA
11 MARCH 2014

3. EXECUTIVE OFFICE REPORTS

3.1 Emergency Management Fire and Rescue Levy

Date: 11 March 2014
Author: Ian Flint, Chief Executive Officer
Responsible Officer: Ian Flint, Chief Executive Officer
File No: Formal Papers

Report

1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide for further discussion and to establish a position with the State Government on the Emergency Management Fire and Rescue Levy and the apparent duplication with Rural Fire Brigade and State Emergency Service charges raised by Council.

This special forum is designed to provide a formal ordinary meeting structure to allow for Council to make recommendations for further action and to openly discuss with the State Government, Council's position with a view to preparing for the 2014/15 Budget.

Council resolved at the 26th February 2014 Ordinary Council Meeting to meet with the State Member for Lockyer to discuss these. Council has also requested representatives from the State Government to attend for this discussion. Council has been informed that Ian Rickuss MP, Member for Lockyer as well as Russell Neuendorf, Executive Director, Operations Business & Strategy and Jason Smith, Urban Fire Levy Officer from the Public Safety Business Agency will be attending the meeting. The Hon. Jack Dempsey MP, Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services has forwarded his apology due to electorate commitments.

2. Background

Council considered the introduction of the new levy from the State Government at the Ordinary Meeting held 18th December 2013, and resolved to write to the Minister outlining concerns with the proposed introduction of the levy. Communications have been ongoing to and from the State Government without resolution of the issues to date.

Following Council levying the charge with the current half yearly rates there has been significant community feedback of objection to the levy, particularly with the perception of a duplication with Council's existing levies, as a result of the timing of this implementation imposed by the State Government subsequent to Council's budget adoption in July 2013 for the 2013/2014 financial year.



SPECIAL MEETING
AGENDA
11 MARCH 2014

There remains an ongoing expectation for an increased level of service from the State Government following the introduction of this levy to provide for more consistent access to services, similar to those delivered within metropolitan and urbanised areas, which is currently significantly different to those received within rural areas. To date there has been no change or information on changes to services.

The levies currently applied by Council appear to overlap with the application of the state levy and clarification is needed so that Council can consider the need for these levies, given that services provided should be funded from the state levy.

Currently the communities of Lockyer Valley have a limited capacity to pay and the community cannot afford to pay for funding the same services twice, which is a current perception that needs resolution.

The services funded by the levies are critical and essential, and Council supports the intent of the State Government to ensure adequate and appropriate funding for emergency services, but is also wants to ensure that the levies collected are applied to improving services and access to services on the ground, not through additional administrative and compliance initiatives.

The State Government has other ways to raise the revenue required to fund these services, and Council has only limited taxation powers through the Local Government Act, as such Council is seeking any further consideration of amending the application of the State Levy to ensure that the services provided are consistent across the State and reflect the costs of providing those services to at least a minimum standard.

Council needs further certainty from the State Government that the services within our region will be improved following the introduction of this levy as there is significant inconsistency and in some instances a lack of service or access to services and modern equipment that it is hoped will be addressed with the introduction of this levy.

In preparing the 2014/15 budget consideration will need to be given to amending or removing the existing Council charges should these be funded by the State Government.

Officer's Recommendation:

THAT Council seek a resolution to the Council's concerns regarding the Emergency Management Fire and Rescue Levy from the State Government for consideration at the next Ordinary Meeting of Council, to be held 26th March 2014.

Further;

THAT Council requests a review of the application of the State Government's Emergency Management Fire and Rescue Levy to minimise any duplication with Council's existing levies and to ensure that ratepayers are receiving the benefits of the new levy through upgraded services at least to minimum standard.

And further;

THAT upon the State Government's response, Council review its existing Rural Fire Brigade and State Emergency Service Levies for the upcoming 2014/15 Budget.



SPECIAL MEETING
AGENDA
11 MARCH 2014



SPECIAL MEETING
AGENDA
11 MARCH 2014

3.2 Toowoomba Second Range Crossing

Date: 11 March 2014
Author: Ian Flint, Chief Executive Officer
Responsible Officer: Ian Flint, Chief Executive Officer
File No: Formal Papers

Report

1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide for further discussion and to reaffirm Councils' support with the State and Federal Government on the Toowoomba Second Range Crossing.

This special forum is designed to provide a formal ordinary meeting structure to allow for Council to make recommendations for further action and to openly discuss Council's support for the project subject to proposed conditions previously resolved.

Council resolved at the 26th February 2014 Ordinary Council Meeting to meet with the State Member for Lockyer to discuss these concerns. Ian Rickuss MP, Member for Lockyer has confirmed his availability for this meeting and representatives from the State Government have committed to provide a full briefing for the whole Council at a later date.

2. Background

Council has been a long standing supporter of the second range crossing and has openly communicated this support.

Council has also advocated for a reasonable toll imposition for road users of the second range crossing, acknowledging the need for an economically reasonable approach for industry and transport operators.

Council maintains its position that the impacts on the local council road network before, during and after the construction of the new road infrastructure be minimised.

Council also seeks to be included in any steering committee associated with the project to the extent of monitoring the impacts on existing infrastructure associated with the construction activity and to provide input to the considerations of the toll to be applied.

Officer's Recommendation:

THAT Council affirm its long standing support for the Toowoomba Second Range Crossing conditioned upon toll charge and road network consideration and commit this support in writing to the Federal and State Governments.



EXTRAORDINARY MEETING
OF ORDINARY COUNCIL
MEETING AGENDA
11 MARCH 2014

4. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

No Information Items reports at time of print run