

# NAMBUCCA SHIRE COUNCIL

## Ordinary Council Meeting - 16 May 2019

### **LATE AGENDA**

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**NOTICE OF MOTION**

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**ITEM 5.5    SF2547            160519    MAYORAL MINUTE - EMERGENCY SERVICES LEVY  
                 INCREASE**

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**AUTHOR/ENQUIRIES:** Rhonda Hoban, Councillor

**SUMMARY:**

Each year, the NSW Government collects payments from councils and insurers to fund emergency services agencies in NSW, with councils required to pay 11.7 per cent of the budget required by NSW Emergency Services. These charges are embedded in council rates and insurance premiums.

From 1 July 2019 the NSW Government plans to collect an additional \$160 million (in 2019/20) from NSW councils, communities and those paying insurance premiums to provide better workers' compensation coverage for volunteer and career firefighters who are diagnosed with one of 12 specific work-related cancers.

Councils were sent bills with a letter from Revenue NSW in May 2019, saying NSW council contributions will increase by \$19 million in 2019/20. The letter also foreshadowed increases in the following year, but not the amount.

The Nambucca Shire Council received an invoice from Revenue NSW for \$431,106 for its emergency services levy contribution. This is \$74,000 more than last year's levy (a 20%) increase. This will mean Council will need to find additional funds and/or cut planned initiatives or services.

Council supports career and volunteer firefighters in NSW – as it does all emergency services workers and volunteers. Indeed, many NSW council staff and councillors are volunteers. We also support the Bill passed in November 2018 to address what was a workers' compensation shortfall.

However, the sector was at no point advised that it would be required to cover the cost via significant increases to the emergency services levy, or what this cost would be.

Proportional to Council revenue, the extra \$74,000 Nambucca Shire Council is being asked to pay is a large amount and the impact of this unplanned cost will certainly be felt by the community.

Local Government NSW is calling upon the NSW Government to fund the first 12 months of this extra cost and work with local governments to ensure the implementation of the funding mechanism is fairer into the future.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That Council:**

**A    Notes:**

- a    That last December, the NSW Government enacted laws to provide better workers compensation coverage for firefighters who are diagnosed with one of twelve specific work-related cancers.**
- b    That in many areas of NSW, fire services are made up of elected and staff members of local government, and that local governments strongly support this expanded workers compensation scheme.**
- c    That as a result of these changes, the State Government has decided to implement the new scheme by charging local governments an increased Emergency Services Levy, without consultation.**

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**ITEM 5.5 MAYORAL MINUTE - EMERGENCY SERVICES LEVY INCREASE**

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- d That the expected increase in costs to local governments will be \$19m in the first year alone, and that there is a little or no time to enshrine this charge in Council's 2019/2020 budgets.
  - e That Local Government NSW has long advocated for the Emergency Services Levy to be significantly modified to ensure it is transparent, equitable and accountable.
- B That this Council supports Local Government NSW's call for:**
- a The NSW Government to cover the initial additional \$19m increase to local governments for the first year; and
  - b The NSW Government to work with NSW local governments to redesign the funding mechanism for the scheme to ensure fairness into the future.
- C Requests the General Manager liaise with Local Government NSW to provide information on:**
- a The impact on council budgets; and
  - b Council advocacy actions undertaken.
- D Requests that the Mayor**
- a Write to the NSW Premier and NSW Interim Opposition Leader, NSW Minister for Customer Services, NSW Minister for Local Government, and local state member/s to:
    - i call upon the NSW Government to fund the 12 months of this extra cost rather than requiring councils to find the funds at short notice when budgets have already been allocated
    - ii explain how this sudden increase will impact council services / the local community.
    - iii highlight that councils were not warned of the increased cost until May 2019, despite the new laws being passed in November 2018
    - iv explain that the poor planning and implementation of the increase is inconsistent with the Government's commitment to work in partnership with the sector
    - v ask the Government to work with local governments to redesign the implementation of the scheme to ensure it is fairer for councils and communities into the future.
  - b Copy the above letter to Local Government NSW.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

There are no attachments for this report.

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**GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT**

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**ITEM 9.19 PRF53 160519 ARBORIST REPORT - FUTURE OF SIX (6) KAFFIR PLUM TREES - ADDITIONAL SUBMISSIONS**

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**AUTHOR/ENQUIRIES:** Michael Coulter, General Manager

**SUMMARY:**

The submissions within this report were not included in the report to Council.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the information in the submissions be received.**

**OPTIONS:**

The report is for information. The substantive recommendation to Council is contained in item 9.2.

**DISCUSSION:**

The following written submissions were not included in the report to Council.

Mary Forbes

*The key issue with regard to the Kaffir Plum trees along the river in River Street, Macksville, is that people appreciate them and do not want to see them removed. If they are to be replaced, the community would prefer to see new trees planted now so that they have a few years to establish themselves and provide the canopy so valued in the present.*

*While the Council's tree-planting in other streets is to be commended, to remove these trees, even in a staged removal, replacing them with young, undeveloped trees, would create an arid, hot and inhospitable bare riverbank.*

*The beauty of these trees and the harmony with an element of Nature they afford is undeniable. In their maturity they have developed gorgeous, glossy canopies, providing deep, cool shade for people, pets and parked cars. Though we live in a climate of hot summers, we have no shady carpark in Macksville and people vie for spots under the shade of these trees. With the march of accelerated climate change due to global warming, a cool retreat will be even more highly valued.*

*The beauty and amenity of the trees acts as a focal point, drawing locals and visitors to linger in the shade and appreciate our town. The area is accessible and inviting for people with disabilities and families with strollers and children. The trees have some community history and are home to fond memories of many townsfolk.*

*They lend our town grace and character. They attract travellers to stop, buy their lunch, stroll and sit by the river, thus bringing business to our town. Tourists travel to towns such as Grafton and Sawtell to admire the splendid jacarandas and magnificent figs. Natural beauty is stimulating for the economy.*

*It has been mentioned that the trees drop fruit and can attract bats and birds that may leave droppings on the picnic tables. These are hardly insurmountable obstacles with which other Councils, who appreciate the advantages of trees, manage to deal. It is a small price to pay for bringing the gift of Nature into our town to soften hard, built environment.*

*The Arborist's Report considers that the two least healthy trees have five to fifteen years, time enough for new trees to settle and begin to grow, were they planted now. This minimum could be extended by the provision of a good garden bed around the two plums affected by bare, harsh, compacted soil.*

*Other people, including the reporting arborist, have recommended species of trees to replace the Kaffir Plums. Some local people have expressed a preference for indigenous species; thus, we would add to these suggestions the Cheesetree (*Glochidion ferninandi*). These could be planted beneath the existing plums, on the northern side, would cope with establishing themselves in the shade, grow dense, glossy canopies and are trees that do not create problems with litter and roots.*

*We request Council maintain the existing Kaffir Plums until their natural life expectancy is reached and that replacement trees be planted now to maximise their chances of providing real, beautiful shade in imitation*

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**ITEM 9.19 ARBORIST REPORT - FUTURE OF SIX (6) KAFFIR PLUM TREES - ADDITIONAL SUBMISSIONS**

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*of the glorious canopies and velvety shade we currently enjoy under our beloved Kaffir Plums. We wish to thank Council for listening to community concerns on this issue.*

Peter and Marie Thomas

*We are concerned about the intention to cull the Macksville riverside trees. There is not enough shade in either Macksville nor Nambucca Heads, and the summers are getting hotter and longer. We need to maintain the canopy and the tree planting should be an ongoing process. We certainly don't want to see the kaffir plums cut down until they are actually failing. The trees are an asset to the community, much as the row of trees are in the centre of Sawtell. Additionally, more large trees in the main street of the Nambucca Heads CBD would be an improvement. Thank you for your attention.*

**CONSULTATION:**

There has been no consultation.

**SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT:****Environment**

As indicated in item 9.2.

**Social**

As indicated in item 9.2

**Economic**

As indicated in item 9.2

**Risk**

As indicated in item 9.2

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:****Direct and indirect impact on current and future budgets**

As indicated in item 9.2

**Working funds – justification for urgency and cumulative impact**

There is no impact on working funds.

**Service level changes and resourcing/staff implications**

There are no service level implications.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

There are no attachments for this report.