

ALLOCATION OF FUNDS FOR “TRACKS IN USE” (TIU) ON CROWN LANDS

REPORTING SECTION: Executive Services
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Summary:

This report provides Council with information for a decision on making a contribution toward maintenance of “Tracks in Use” (TIU) on crown land, being the Miners Road from the first ramp to the Grawin Store, and “Car Door Tours” in the opal fields located on the Lightning Ridge Area Opal Reserve (LRAOR)

Background:

The TIU are essentially roads on crown land servicing the hundreds of mining camps and villages in the Lightning Ridge and Grawin, Glengarry and Sheep yards Opal fields. Management of the Reserve is the responsibility of the Lightning Ridge Area Opal Reserve and the roads in question (TIU) offer residents/ratepayers, tourists, bus and business operators with a route to the shire wide road network.

Ratepayers from the Grawin Glengarry Sheep yard area contribute in the order of \$604,000 (10.44% of total annual rate income) annually in general purpose rate revenue and \$9,000 in tip access fees.

Current Position:

Council currently makes a contribution of \$30,000 towards the maintenance of two (2) waste facilities in the Grawin, Glengarry and Sheep yards mining area, and in the last financial year very little of the contribution was utilised for road maintenance, due to the poor state of the waste facilities that required upgrading and on-going maintenance to meet compliance obligations. This will be an on-going issue that needs to be funded from the Domestic Waste Fund and adjusted accordingly at the September 20 Quarterly Budget Review.

The Miners road from the newly gazetted and dedicated shire road portion (first ramp) to the Grawin store is in an appalling state, potholed, corrugated and in some places the road is non-existent, and although Council does not have a legal responsibility to make a contribution towards its maintenance, it has a moral obligation to its residents and ratepayers to assist the LRAOR with provision of a trafficable route to the broader shire wide road network.

At the last Reserve meeting it was agreed that stakeholders LRMA, GGSMA, LRAOR and Council would collaborate on this matter, and in the short term make a financial contribution toward the repair of the TIU network.

The writer has made representation to Crown Lands to investigate the possible gazettal and dedication of the remaining section of Miners Road from the first grid to the Grawin store and section of the Three Mile Road at Lightning Ridge to the new Australian Opal Centre. Crown Lands advise both TIU are subject to overlapping mineral claims and this is managed by the Division of Resources & Geoscience (DRG). Dedication shall depend upon the status of the mineral claims in question.

Relevant Reference Documents/Policies:

Local Government Act 1993
Local Government (General) Regulation 2005
Crown Land Management Act

Governance issues:

Council has an obligation to its residents, ratepayers, school bus operator and the travelling public negotiating the TIU.

Financial Implications:

The budget allocation for Unsealed Shire Road Maintenance in 2020/2021 is \$717,501, and should the remaining allocation of \$657,501 be insufficient for maintenance expenditure during the year, the position can be reviewed during a Quarterly Budget Review process throughout the year.

Alternative Solutions/Options:

Council not allocate the funding.

Conclusion:

The writer recommends Council make a contribution of \$60,000 from the unsealed shire roads maintenance budget, toward the joint maintenance project of the Miners Road at Grawin being \$30,000 and a further \$30,000 contribution to the Car Door Tour TIU in the Lightning Ridge area.

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Recommendation:

That Council make a \$30,000 contribution toward maintenance of the Miners Road (from the first ramp to the Grawin Store) a “Track In Use” and a further \$30,000 allocation to the upgrading of Car Door Tour Roads, “Tracks In Use”, and this be funded from the 2020/2021 Unsealed Shire Roads Budget allocation.

Moved:

Seconded:

Attachments:

Nil