

Held at the Bermagui Community Centre on 1 February 2022

Attendees: Ian Macfarlane – Council, Director
Assets & Operations (Chair)
Daniel Djikic – Council, Manager Project
Services (via Teams)
Ken Robinson
Ken Murtagh (via Teams)
Christine Bimson
Jenifer Lowe
Geoffrey Steel

Emily Harrison – Council, Manager
Communications & Events
Gary Louie- Council, Manager, Works &
Assets
Georgina McIntyre – Council, Executive
Assistant, Assets & Operations (Minutes)

1. Apologies

An apology was received from Paul Payten

Barbara Wilkinson and Rebecca Hamilton have resigned from the group.

As Rebecca represents the interests of the oyster growers she passed on her feedback on their behalf. The primary concern for the oyster growers is that the bridge remains sustainable for their regular freight.

2. Confirmation of minutes

Mr Macfarlane thanked the group for their comments and feedback on the previous minutes. The minutes of the meeting held on 13.12.21 were accepted.

3. Actions from previous meeting

3.1 Request for glossary of terms

At the previous meeting Geoff Steel asked if a glossary of terms could be made available to the group. Gary Louie provided this via email to the group on 2.2.22

3.2 Publishing of minutes

Minutes from the meetings held on November 1 and December 13 have now been published on the Bega Valley Shire Council (BVSC) website. The current minutes will be published once approved.

4. New Business

4.1 Update on recent repair works carried out by BVSC.

Mr Macfarlane provided an update to the group on the recent repair works carried out on the bridge including the following:

- The primary concerns raised by the structural assessment were:
 - a) Lateral stability due to loss of pier support
 - b) Deterioration of individual components
 - c) Low safety factor of individual structural components
 - d) Dynamic load transference due to (heavy) vehicles travelling at speed
- Council's bridge team installed extra steel piles to mitigate the lateral stability and load transference concerns.
- The timber components were inspected and it was noted that in some instances the cracking in longitudinal girders wasn't as substantial as first thought. In some instances, bolting through the member was carried out to arrest further cracking.
- The immediate concerns have been addressed by this work and the load limit has been raised to 15 tonnes. Feedback was received from Cardno that in order consider further raising of the load limit analysis of each structural element would be required. Costs would likely be in excess of \$100k to do the assessment and modelling. Council does not have an identified budget to cover this.
- Geoff Steel noted that some bolting rails have been replaced under the bridge. Mr Macfarlane advised that these are not structural, and that bolt tightening is part of Council's routine maintenance which will continue.
- Jenifer Lowe asked how much the recent repairs cost. Mr Macfarlane advised that while it's difficult to give an exact figure (Originally estimated at approximately \$100k including replacing 2 x Girders – as this was not undertaken following discussion with Cardno, only approx. \$50k was committed at this time).
- Geoff Steel asked how long the repairs will last. Mr Macfarlane advised that because there are so many different components of the bridge at varying levels of disrepair, there is no way of providing an exact answer to this question.

The speed limit on the bridge was discussed. It was acknowledged that the limit is conservative, but it does force people to slow down. It was also acknowledged that heavy vehicles have more impact when speeding across the bridge. Christine Bimson noted that she has observed a number of vehicles driving over the bridge at speed. She suggested more/better signage and believes that yellow signs are more effective. Gary Louie advised the difference between speed limit signs- yellow signs are advisory only, and white signs (with the number in a red circle) are enforceable.

Ken Robinson asked what the worst-case scenario would be for the bridge. Mr Macfarlane responded that it would be if we discovered a fault that forced the closure of the bridge.

Mr Macfarlane noted that Council will continue monthly inspection in the immediate term and annual higher-level inspections to be undertaken by a structural engineer. Council will also report any adverse findings back to Cardno.

It was confirmed that there are no current plans for further bridge closures, or to increase the load limit at this time.

4.2 Final discussion on content for inclusion in report to Council 16 March 2022

No additional points regarding the heritage were made, aside from those made at the previous meeting.

Mr Macfarlane will be attending a workshop with Councillors on 2/2/22, where he will make a presentation on Cuttagee bridge, this presentation is based on the one provided to this group at their first meeting.

Councillor O'Neil will be presenting a motion of notice at the Council meeting on February 9.

Mr Macfarlane has begun preparing the report for the Council meeting on March 16, it will be finalised 3 weeks prior meeting and will be provided to the group for comment. Mr Macfarlane asked that feedback be prompt as the report is time constrained. He reminded the group that the focus of this report will be the heritage value of the bridge, as outlined in the group guidelines.

Christine Bimson asked if the Grant Management role who recently left Council will impact the ability to find funding for the bridge. Mr Macfarlane advised that it would not, as road and bridge grant funding is constantly being sought by Assets and Operations.

The Regional Road Handback Program was discussed. This is a program from the NSW Government to potentially take responsibility for certain regional roads that Councils find financially difficult to maintain; it does not provide funding. Council submitted its proposal in November 2021 (including MR272, which includes Cuttagee Bridge) and expect a decision in June or July 2022.

Fixing Country Bridges (FCB) was discussed. Cuttagee Bridge was rejected in FCB Round 1 and not included in Round 2 as it falls outside the criteria due primarily to its heritage status. There is currently no external funding available which specifically covers heritage bridges.

The heritage status of the bridge means there is a different (and more difficult) pathway for demolition and reconstruction, which would include reports and assessments and could take many years.

The Bridge Replacement Program is focused on freight routes; therefore, Council will not be submitting Cuttagee for this program.

Geoff Steel presented his ideas for the structure of the report including:

- a) Background and members of the group
- b) Reference to the outcome of the Council meeting on February 9
- c) Discussion of heritage values of bridge

Mr Macfarlane thanked Geoff for his input and advised that Council reports already have a defined structure which includes the points he has outlined.

The significance of a single lane structure in regard to the bridges' heritage was discussed as being high value. The group noted that it would be more difficult for Council to obtain funding for a single lane bridge within current funding programs and structures, and if it was more likely to secure funding for a bridge that was future proof, then compromise on certain aspects would be necessary. The minimum width for a double lane bridge was confirmed as 6.4m. This does not factor in cyclists or pedestrians.

5. Closure & Next meeting

The meeting was closed at 6pm

The time, date and location of the next meeting will be confirmed following the outcome of Council meetings on February 9 and March 16.