

Wingham Community Conversation – 7 May 2019

Q1. I would like to know the progress of the Rural Strategy in relation to building detached granny flats/cottages on rural land. I can't understand why this is such a problem when it seems to be ok in town.

A. The Rural Strategy is currently being drafted and will go on public exhibition when this process is complete. There will be opportunity at this time for members of the community to make comment on the various aspects of the strategy.

Q2. Why were the trees at the Bight Cemetery cut down?

A. We removed 11 storm damaged trees from along the roadside near the Bight Cemetery earlier this year. A major storm in December 2018 ripped two of the 11 golden cypress trees out, damaging a number of graves in the process. This prompted an assessment of the remaining nine trees by a qualified tree specialist. This assessment indicated the trees had shear plane cracks with an imminent likelihood of failure and we had no choice other than to remove them. The decision to remove them was not taken lightly, however public safety outweighs all other factors and we have a responsibility to our community to remove trees that place people at risk in public places.

Q3. Why do you have to register our question before the meeting for this gives you time to brain storm a lie to cover your tracks and get the best outcome for you. Not allowing the rate payer to ask a question without notice will either show incompetence or result in an answer that contains the truth. We prefer the truth. Now if you could answer that without the usual fall back of "Questions with notice allows us to allocate correct resources to the response" please do so.

A. The facility to ask a question online before a meeting is purely to provide those who do not have the opportunity to attend, or those who do not feel comfortable asking a question publicly, to have their query addressed. Anyone who has attended one of the Community Conversations will be aware it is a very open and honest conversation between the community and Council and there are many opportunities for members of the community to ask any question they wish.

Q4. The footpaths in Wingham are in a deplorable state. When can the community expect an upgrade to the problem? Also the entry road into Wingham from Taree is third world to say the least, is this on a to-do list if not, why not!

A. Council is working on developing a Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan for the MidCoast area. This plan will bring together the strategies of the previous Councils and provide a framework to assess the needs of community. The plan will consider the existing infrastructure as well as current and future demands in an effort to prioritise future works. This will serve as a base to require works from new development and also allow Council to pursue grant funding opportunities. While it would be impossible to have footpaths and cycle ways everywhere across the MidCoast area these strategies are intended to prioritise the areas where these

facilities are needed the most so that we can target our resources to give the best benefits to the community.

There is \$7.6m committed to Wingham Road between Taree and Wingham over the next four years. Entry into Wingham from Taree has been programmed for 2021, and we are currently designing a two kilometre section near Youngs Road.

Q5. When is Council going to fix the two flyscreens at Ormsby House, also put in smoke detectors and fix the wheelchair toilet as a person in a wheelchair cannot get into the toilet and close the door.

A. The flyscreens are being fixed following this report. The building is compliant with the relevant building codes, as applied at the time of construction, and while there is no legislative requirement to bring buildings up to current standards we are undertaking further investigations into improving accessibility in the toilet area.

Q6. When is the strategic planning process likely to be implemented in Wingham? How does the Council plan to communicate the steps involved, and how does it plan to get a cross section of community interest groups involved?

A. A local community planning framework was adopted by Council and a recommendation from staff supported to implement local community planning in Wingham in the near future. Council will be getting this process underway in the new financial year.

Q7. The NSW LNP Government, before the recent election, committed to funding the new Cedar Party Bridge in Wingham, if elected. Now they are back in Government, has Council received advice on when funding might be received and is council prepared, that is "shovel ready", to proceed when funds are assigned? Further, what is the projected timeline from commencement to completion?

A. There was a pre-election commitment for funding for the bridge. This was part of an announcement for the Fixing Country Bridge grant fund program and additional funding for local roads. Specific funding for Cedar Party Bridge has not been secured. We will still have to apply for funds when the next round of grants open. Obviously with the previous commitment we have more than a good chance of gaining the funding, provided that we meet the grant funding criteria. We are ready to go to detailed design as soon as the funding is locked in. At this stage we would envisage a three month tender period, six months for the design, three months for a construction tender and a twelve month construction period (i.e. total of 24 months once funding is secured).

Q8. Wingham Advancement Group supported, and advocated for, the proposal that a new bridge be constructed over Cedar Party Creek into Wingham via the Wingham Memorial Swimming Centre site - on the basis of a Council commitment for 'like for like' replacement of facilities on a new site - and the new pool is to be built before construction commences on the new bridge. What is the current status of planning for the new pool, including proposed location and funding allocated for the project?

A. The commitment still stands, however we do not yet have a location for a new pool locked in. The community has made it quite clear they want the pool to remain in the central part of town, so we are trying to work within that parameter. However, until funding is gained for the bridge, progressing plans for a new pool are premature. We have funds set aside for the purchase of land for a pool, however this won't be spent until we have the funds for the bridge and that project locked in.

Q9. How many people use the Wingham pool?

A. YMCA manage the pool and they have the data on how many people use it.

Q10. Cedar Party Bridge is the main Council asset but can only take one truck on the bridge at a time? When will this be replaced?

A. We will continue to maintain the bridge as an asset until we can replace the bridge. When planning works for capital infrastructure we are required to investigate the cost which requires surveying, flood studies, data, planning, we look at all the different ways we could replace the bridge and build our case, without doing this we wouldn't be able to obtain an estimate of costs. Some money has to be spent to be able to lodge for grant funding, but we need all the information before we can lodge. Council are ready to go to a detailed design tender to do final works.

Q11. There is a major problem happening in the park at Crowdy Head from a noxious weed called "Spiny Burr Grass". Approx. 20% of the park is now unusable due to infestation which has escalated in the last two years. If not controlled this could manifest into a major problem for not only the park but also surrounding areas. Urgent action is needed.

A. The burr grass in question is Mossman River Grass AKA *Cenchrus echinatus*. It is relatively well established in the local environment around Harrington and widespread along the foreshore. We are currently assessing whether or not broad scale management of this weed is achievable. It is extremely difficult managing pest grasses within desirable grasses, and effective management of them would require a broad scale inter-departmental collaborative program.

Q12. The road from Harrington to Crowdy Head is breaking up on the shoulders, the road is badly in need of being upgraded due to heavy usage from locals / tourists.

A. The road between Harrington and Crowdy is generally in fair condition with several poor segments. Resurfacing of the fair sections will be undertaken in the coming two to three years. Major reconstruction will not be undertaken in the short term. The edge breaks and shoulder works will be placed on our maintenance program to ensure the road remains safe.

Q13. Could you please outline current / future plans for general maintenance and "spruce up" which is woefully overdue at Crowdy Head? eg - road next to Surf Club - drainage and resurface; carpark at Surf Club - fill and grade, improve grass areas; "Pebbles" (from Surf Club to Harbour) - remove invasive weeds and rubbish, re-establish walking path from village to Surf Club (currently walk along the road); Harbour area - fish co-op, wharf; track to South Beach single lane on corner needs widening.

A. The carpark is currently Crown Land. As per the changes to the Crown Land Act, it may be that Council will manage this area. Once that is determined we can look at the space and determine the best course of action. Cycle ways and walk ways will be addressed in line with the Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan as explained in the answer to question 5.

Q14. At the Golf Club we have noticed the effect of climate change on our water to manage the golf course infrastructure. Over the last few years rainfall patterns and amounts have changed. This has resulted in a shortage of water for management of our tees and greens. Are there any plans in place at council to assist local organisations to help overcome these problems that are becoming

more urgent? Does council have a policy in place for the future that we face as a result of Climate Change?

- A. Most of Council's environmental programs are not localised enough to address specific concerns at the Club. Finding alternate water sources would be ideal. Options such as recycled water from Wingham Sewage Treatment Plant may not be cost effective due to the distance from the treatment plant. Other more practical solutions could include larger onsite storages, as well as more drought tolerant grasses.

Q15. I have been advised by Mayor West that a purpose built Administrative Centre on a Taree site is not viable. Could you please advise what research has been undertaken and what is the estimated cost of such an option ie a new purpose built building?

- A. A purpose-built facility was considered as part of the review undertaken to determine how best to proceed as a much larger, unified Council with approximately 350 administrative staff. The estimated cost for a purpose built facility is \$60 million.

Q16. There are many roads with pot holes, the gravel washes away and no maintenance.

- A. We do provide varying levels of service on public roads depending on the number of vehicles who use the road, vehicle speeds and risk. There are some low traffic roads that we don't regularly maintain. Whilst we have put additional funding into roads in recent years, historically there has been an extended period where this was not the case. As a result many of our unsealed roads do not have a good gravel surface. Without a reasonable thickness of gravel on the road surface, it is difficult to do any effective maintenance. With the additional funding for road maintenance, we are progressively adding gravel to our unsealed roads to give us more material to work with. On the sealed road network we are fixing more of the problems that are causing the potholes in the first place. Obviously we can't fix them all at once, it will take quite a long time for us to be able to make up for what happened in the past.

Q17. What is being done to promote the Taree Aviation Business Park which has had no development take place since it was open three years ago? As a rate payer and member of the community I hate to see funds being spent on programs that have no return.

- A. Taree Airport there are hangars and carpark and behind that is a subdivision created to sell of allotments of land where business could set up to put hangars on. The land has been released and marketed by Schultz Commercial, and while some lots have been sold, nothing has been built on them at this point in time.

Q18. When council moves to Masters are they looking at moving the Taree Library there also?

- A. No, we own the Taree Library floor of that building and there is no plan to move the library to Biripi Way.

Q19. When are Council looking to move in to Masters?

- A. Council is looking at June next year to move in to Masters.

* updated July 2019 – a more specific moving time will be provided once tenders are awarded and timelines established.

Q20. Can we assume that Masters is going ahead?

A. Yes, Council resolved at the April meeting to proceed with the project. The next stage is to report to Council with the design and construct tender and then we can move forward to construction.

Q21. Council not aligning as MidCoast but seem to have aligned with the Hunter. MidCoast doesn't exist above Nahiab it seems. We are not part of the Hunter, we are concerned we will lose our identity.

A. It is the State Government that sets the service boundaries and all our State services, with the exception of tourism, are aligned with the Hunter.

Q22. The automatic toilets in Taree don't work.

A. The automatic toilets in Taree are being replaced as part of the new Livvy's playground.

Q23. Toilets at the old Taree pool site are always locked.

A. These toilets are regularly vandalised and now permanently locked. There are other issues also like motorised vehicles not being able to access the disabled toilets. The toilets can be unlocked as required however there are multiple issues with those toilets. They are not fit for purpose. The new toilet block tied to Livvy's playground will cater for the needs in that area.

Q24. Where does the environmental levy go?

The environmental levy goes to a range of projects across the entire MidCoast region. Much of it goes to farmers to fence, to revegetate, we need to actively publicise how this is spent. Council intends to start publishing how we are spending the money across the region.

Top priorities

1. Footpaths and cycle ways
2. Roads
3. Central Park masterplan
4. CBD beautification
5. Roundabout – Bent and Farquhar Street

Full list of priorities identified

Group one priorities

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Emergency coordinated plan - too much fragmentation <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Flood isolation – no way out if old bridge goes b. Money for Riverbank not being used 2. Swimming Pool - Fit for purpose 3. Roads – new sealing gravel as well upgrade – bridge 4. Plan needed Tinonee Rd in particular 5. Walkways/cycle ways – especially for kids and oldies connecting the town safely | <p>Group two priorities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not overdevelop Wingham to maintain village atmosphere 2. Proper rebuild of local street 3. Regular maintenance of CBD streets and footpaths 4. Roundabout top pub – museum corner – option virtual roundabout 5. Widening Wherrol Flat Road – line marking 6. Treat weeds and remove the rubbish (fire hazards) including noxious weeds. 7. Bridge replacements priority 8. Street beautification |
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Group two priorities

<p>6. Groups not coordinated – fragmentation</p>	<p>9. Improved car park signs for McCulloughers</p> <p>10. How can we stop business closures? Promote tourism and support</p> <p>11. Replace cedar party bridge after new pool</p> <p>12. Bridges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Cedar b. Deep Creek c. Ashla Bridge
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Group three priorities

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Environment / Commercial <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More vegetation • Street scape • Main street • Wingham Brush • Dog park • Business closures • Local support? Chamber? Economic climate? 2. Transport – poorer roads, fewer tourists – Nowendoc Rd 80km limit 3. Tourism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rest areas • Town entrance signs • Tourist drive 8 – promotion • River 4. Social <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment • Family facilities • Age care extras 5. History – Brandline 6. Services – health and education
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Group four priorities

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parks and recreation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Safe parks b. Performance space in the park c. Better planned central park so we can gradually improve it d. More access to Dingo Creek and Manning River for kayaks e. Improve signage to advertise tourist drive and include a bridge map in the town f. Improve free camping areas g. Pontoon for various businesses to hire and share water sports gear to rent h. Artistic solar lighting in central park consistent with heritage 2. Main Street makeover (heritage) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. More appealing street scape b. Main street beautification c. Tree planting and shade structures in town centre and main street d. More parking for RV's and caravans e. Shade trees in the main street f. Murals g. Things that focus on our historical attraction and improve it h. Flat safe footpaths 3. Social and Community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Support in time and energy for community plan and strategy ASAP b. Soft infrastructure to encourage arts and culture c. Encourage local social groups and activities to advertise widely d. Encouragement for businesses to open on weekends and holidays 4. Festivals and attractions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Cycle path Wingham to Taree b. Encourage busking
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. Christmas festival and involve all of the town centre not just Bent Street and Park Street. d. Murals festival e. Signage of local tourist spots in multiple areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Encourage and Support Business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Allied services b. Cohesive support for businesses c. Funky toilet tour?
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Group five priorities

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Beautify main street with trees 2. Beautifying entrance from Young's Road into Wingham 3. Maybe signs at all entrances 4. Signage at Kolodong also with beautiful pictures 5. Roundabout at museum 6. Repainting and general maintenance of town facilities 7. Encourage green spaces and keep them beautiful 8. Improve local roads – improve road maintenance practices 9. Toilet blocks modernised 10. Improve roads and parking at Wingham Brush 11. Kolodong subdivision/roundabout 12. Bridge/pool – shade cloth over swimming pool 13. Value for rates 14. Local recycling 15. Footpaths
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Group six priorities

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Roundabout at Bent and Farquhar Street 2. Non-smoking at bus stops – signage 3. More public seating through town 4. Support local businesses to enhance the shop facades and signage 5. Water bubbles and refill stations in parks and shopping centres 6. Cycleway between Wingham and Taree along the river front 7. Seating/parks/launching ramps etc along river side 8. Local festivals and events (infrastructure needed) 9. More shade (row of internal streets) and seats in central park 10. Tree lined street parks especially in the main street to improve tourism and liveability 11. Better public transport linkages between townships 12. Cycle ways and walking paths 13. Road improvements – everywhere but especially in town 14. Local recycling collection point 15. Better engagement with Aboriginal communities 16. Street acknowledgement of Aboriginal history and community (sculpture, statues and gardens)
