
LATE ITEMS BUSINESS PAPER

General Meeting

Wednesday 10 May 2017

Roma Administration Centre

NOTICE OF MEETING

Date: 9 May 2017

Mayor:

Councillor T D Golder

Deputy Mayor:
Councillors:

Councillor J L Chambers
Councillor N H Chandler
Councillor P J Flynn
Councillor G B McMullen
Councillor W M Newman
Councillor C J O'Neil
Councillor D J Schefe
Councillor J M Stanford

Chief Executive Officer:

Ms Julie Reitano

Senior Management:

Mr Cameron Castles (Director Infrastructure Services)
Mr Rob Hayward (Director Development, Facilities &
Environmental Services)
Ms Sharon Frank (Director Corporate, Community & Commercial
Services)

Officers:

Ms Jane Frith (Coordinator Communications)

Please find attached agenda for the **General Meeting** to be held at the Roma Administration Centre on
May 10, 2017 at 9.00AM.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julie Reitano'.

Julie Reitano
Chief Executive Officer

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OFFICER REPORT

Meeting: General 10 May 2017

Date: 9 May 2017

Item Number: L.1

File Number: D17/35001

SUBJECT HEADING: Booringa Action Group - Tourism Proposal to Maranoa Regional Council

Classification: Open Access

Officer's Title: Manager - Economic & Community Development

Executive Summary:

Booringa Action Group of Mitchell has sought Council's endorsement of key actions associated with BAG's Tourism Development plan for Mitchell. While Council conducts its due diligence on the bulk of the proposal, it is happy to endorse one of the actions namely:

- Restore and maintain the River Walk from the Great Artesian Spa to Fisherman's rest, and
- Applauds the initiative of BAG in establishing a regular Bus Service from the Neil Turner Weir and Major Mitchell Caravan Park (MMCP) to and from the business centre and the Great Artesian Spa.

This report seeks Council's resolution of endorsement.

Officer's Recommendation:

1. That Council provides its approval to Booringa Action Group to restore and maintain the River Walk from the Great Artesian Spa to Fisherman's rest as detailed in its proposal to Council of 31 January 2017, and
 2. Council applauds the initiative of BAG in establishing a regular Bus Service from the Neil Turner Weir and Major Mitchell Caravan Park (MMCP) to and from the business centre and the Great Artesian Spa.
 3. Council will investigate the other aspects of the proposal with a view of assisting BAG and the Mitchell community to achieving its goals, and report back to BAG by 30 June.
-

Body of Report:

Booringa Action Group (BAG) has written to Council seeking support for a number of local Tourism related initiatives which are aimed at improving the economic benefits of the Tourism Industry to the town of Mitchell and district. The group makes the comment that the Tourism industry in Mitchell has great potential and BAG want to lead their community to realise it. The proposal which is attached to this report details specific actions which BAG wish to take using their own funds and a volunteer workforce. BAG requests Council's endorsement and practical support for the proposal specifically actions as detailed in the proposal:

1. Increase the area available to campers along the river bank
2. Restore and maintain the River Walk from the Great Artesian Spa to Fisherman's rest.
3. Establish a regular Bus Service from the Neil Turner Weir and MMCP to and from the business centre and the Spa.
4. Develop additional Tourism product to enhance the visitor experience and provide additional business opportunities.

Council will need to investigate the longer term implications for some of the actions that have the potential to impact on Council's operations into the future, however there are two specific actions which Council has no hesitation in cooperating with immediately, namely;

- Restore and maintain the River Walk from the Great Artesian Spa to Fisherman's rest.
- Establish a regular Bus Service from the Neil Turner Weir and Major Mitchell Caravan Park (MMCP) to and from the business centre and the Great Artesian Spa.

Consultation (internal/external):

- Manager, Roads, Drainage & Parks - Evan Woods
- Coordinator Parks and Gardens - Konrad Crawford
- Councillor's workshop 9 May 2017
- Booringa Action Group

Risk Assessment (Legal, Financial, Political etc.):

There are no unforeseen legal, financial, or political risks associated with this resolution.

Policy Implications:

Nil

Financial Resource Implications:

Nil

Link to Corporate Plan:

Corporate Plan 2014-2019

Strategic Priority 7: Vibrant Communities, Beautiful Towns

7.5 Tourism

7.5.4 Partnerships and marketing

Supporting Documentation:

- | | | |
|------------------------------|--|-----------|
| 1 Down Arrow | Booringa Action Group - Tourism Proposal to MRC | D17/32611 |
| 2 Down Arrow | Booringa Action Group - Tourism Proposal Request | D17/32516 |

Report authorised by:

Director - Development, Facilities & Environmental Services
Chief Executive Officer

BOORINGA ACTION GROUP TOURISM REJUVENATION PROPOSAL

January 31, 2017

OVERVIEW

1. Project Background and Description

Since amalgamation, focus on the Tourism product in Mitchell and surrounds has decreased to the point where visitor spending in the community is markedly decreased. Tourism spending has been a vital component in the cash flow of most local businesses the benefits of which flow throughout the community at large.

We do need to accept the fact that if this trend is to be reversed, restorative action will need to come primarily from within the community. Doing so will not only give the community a sense of achievement and ownership but will also start to re-kindle the "can-do" spirit which once typified the old Booringa Community. It would be hoped that external agencies (Council and other government departments) would also recognize the drive and initiative being demonstrated and consequently offer at least sufficient support to "smooth the way" to a successful outcome.

This Proposal is therefore directed towards rebuilding the number of visitor nights spent in the local community which will in turn increase the visitor spend in local business.

In simplest terms, this Proposal is therefore to put in place a number of relatively simple and low cost steps to increase the number of visitors staying at the Neil Turner Weir/Fisherman's Rest area as well as the MMCP and is founded on the fact that the tourist demographic has progressively moved towards the self-contained traveler as opposed to facility dependent units of past years. Subsequently, it is not expected to compete in any way with the Major Mitchell Caravan Park which plays a vital role in filling the needs of the facility dependent market and in fact, if the aims of the Proposal can be fully achieved, it will provide some additional opportunities for that facility.

2. Project Scope

The Proposal seeks to increase camping space so as to accommodate approximately 150 caravans across the two sites in Mitchell with approximately 300 visitors at any one time during the traditional tourist season. 300 people would represent an increase in the Mitchell township population of about one-third.

The result of this increase in population and the initiatives outlined below would be:

1. Increased business activity in the region,
2. Increased return visitation resulting from a favorable experience,
3. Potential real estate acquisitions as has occurred in the past with tourists taking a liking to the region,
4. New business opportunities,
5. New fundraising opportunities for schools and community groups.

3. Project Steps

The following is an outline of the steps which would need to be taken to successfully deliver this proposal:

- Increase the area available to campers along the river bank area
- Restore and maintain the River Walk from the Great Artesian Spa to Fisherman's Rest
- Establish a regular Bus Service from the Neil Turner Weir and MMCP to and from the business centre and Spa
- Develop additional Tourism product to enhance the visitor experience and provide additional business opportunities.

4. Deliverables

- 1. Increase the area available to campers along the river bank area**
 - Provide additional access road along the river bank utilizing the existing track running west from the sealed road near the Racecourse. Council assistance with this would be sought as the length involved is approximately 400m. Alternatively, sufficient local capacity exists to do this work if all Council can offer is approval.
 - Selectively clear additional campsites along the newly opened access. This would entail only removal of debris and slashing to eliminate any adverse environmental impacts. This step will need to be discussed and approved by both Council and DNRM. It would be simplest if this work was carried out by BAG and community volunteers.
 - Develop and install structured traffic and parking signage to promote the newly opened areas and maximize use of available parking space
- 2. Restore and maintain the River Walk from the Great Artesian Spa to Fisherman's Rest**
 - Seek Council approval for BAG to take over responsibility for the restoration and maintenance of the River Walk.
 - If approval is forthcoming, BAG would need to accept responsibility for mobilizing sufficient volunteers to achieve this objective. There is ample capacity within the community to carry out required works.
 - This would also be a great vehicle for fostering community engagement and ownership in the Riverwalk as other community groups could be invited to participate in any way they would like to e.g. Mens Shed building signage, QCWA doing some small scale fund raising, Aboriginal community doing "bush tucker" identification.
 - Develop a Maintenance Program for the trail which would minimize the continued need for the use of heavy machinery.
 - Obtain the Heritage Museums approval to use the old Maranoa River Walk bridge segments to replace the old and damaged wooden walk bridges on the Western end of the River Walk to Fisherman's Rest.
- 3. Establish a regular Bus Service from the Neil Turner Weir to and from the business centre and Spa providing structured tourism rather than a "find your own way" approach.**
 - Run a bus that daily ferries people to/from the weir and Caravan Park to a drop-off point at the spa and a second point outside the Mitchell News and Casket.
 - Locate color coded tourist poles around town that mark pick-up and drop-off points.
 - This could establish a part-time job possibly utilizing the Sports Club bus providing an opportunity for the Sports Club to also become involved in the project. The legal requirements for carrying fare paying passengers are currently being ascertained.
- 4. Develop additional Tourism product to enhance the visitor experience and provide additional business opportunities.**
 - Every second day provide opportunities for people from both the weir and the MMCP to enjoy tourist day trips to a number of locations in the region e.g. Bonus Downs, Claravale and others.

- Print out timetables that are stored in weather proof boxes at the tourist posts so that visitors can take one when they arrive in Mitchell and then plan their adventures for the week ahead.
- Provide some theatre in some of the day trips. For example:-
- **The Bushranger Day Trip** - Have two people dressed as the Kenniff Brothers at Arrest Creek so when the bus arrives they jump on the bus and explain what happened at the location in a 'first person' narrative style. The bus then takes the tourists and the "Kenniff Brothers" back to the Courthouse where a mock trial is held while the tourists watch on.
- **Major Mitchell Campsite Visit** - Have two people located at the campsite and dressed as explorers. They prepare damper and tea and when the visitors arrive on the bus they are greeted and the history of the spot is explained to them.
- Seek to develop new business opportunities from increased visitation. With increased number of visitors comes great opportunity. Some alternatives for **consideration only** include:
- **A coffee shop** at the weir with a deck overlooking the river. Outdoor seating could accommodate a large number of people who would enjoy sitting in the sun on a winter's day enjoying coffee and tea. Benefits include: Sale of produce from the region. Existing business from town could provide essentials (newspapers, toiletries, bread) sold in a corner of the coffee shop. Hospitality training for school kids in the holidays, Employment in hospitality for others,
- **Kayak Hire** from the coffee shop.
- **Camp Oven** and other fundraising activities
- The aim for the weir would be to create more of a village atmosphere in the park. Have activities for the tourists to do. Example – croquette on the green.

5. Conclusion

The potential benefits that could be delivered by this project have already been outlined in the Sections 1 & 2 at the beginning of this Proposal. There is little doubt of its ability to deliver positively for the community as we would simply be moving towards a tried and proven scenario which has worked well for the community in the past. Perhaps more importantly however, if we can bring it to fruition, it may well be a catalyst for the rejuvenation of community pride and ownership and a necessary first step in becoming masters of our own destiny if only in the tourism field.



Booringa Action Group

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The CEO,
Maranoa Regional Council,
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Dear Julie,

In recent weeks, BAG executive has met with Mayor Golder, Crs Chambers, Schefe and Chandler and Messers Hayward and Sims to outline and discuss a proposal to rejuvenate tourism in the Mitchell area.

In short, the proposal encompasses BAG taking over responsibility for the restoration and maintenance of the Riverwalk at Mitchell as well as some other initiatives to both attract additional tourists to town and place them in the business area. BAG sees tourism as one mechanism which can relatively simply bolster the local economy and our proposal will dovetail neatly with Council's Regional Strategy as outlined by Ed Sims and Warren Oxnam.

As outlined in the proposal, a copy of which is attached, BAG is not seeking any financial assistance for the project but will obviously need formal Council approval before it can proceed. My purpose in writing therefore, is to seek Council's formal consideration of (and hopefully approval for) the proposal as soon as is feasibly possible in its meeting schedule. With the tourist season almost upon us, we are very keen to get moving on this if it is approved by Council.

Yours faithfully,

For Rob Cornish
President
Booringa Action Group Inc.