
Item: 17.1 ABORIGINAL STATEMENT OF RECONCILIATION

REPORT SUMMARY

This report proposes a Statement of Reconciliation for adoption by Council.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council approve the Statement of Reconciliation contained in this Mayoral Minute.

BACKGROUND

The Mayor will be attending the opening of the "Spirit of the Valley" Aboriginal Art Work Exhibition at the Regional Art Gallery on "Aboriginal Sorry Day" 26 May 2005.

This presents an appropriate occasion for the Mayor to express, on behalf of Clarence Valley Council and the citizens of the Valley, a Statement of Reconciliation which has been formally endorsed by the newly elected Council.

The former Maclean Council adopted a Statement of Reconciliation in 1998 which reflected a unanimously adopted similar Statement by the Australian Local Government Association at that time. I have consulted with, and acknowledge, the support of Council's Director Community & Cultural Services, Jill Napier, Manager, Social Planning & Community Development, Bruce Mercer, Community Development Worker (Aged & Disability), Susan Howland and Community Development Worker (Aboriginal Communities), Graham Purcell, in the preparation of the Statement of Reconciliation which I commend to the Council as a positive initiative.

In parallel with the formation at the April 2005 Council meeting of a Clarence Valley Aboriginal Consultative Committee, this Statement will have the capacity to assist in achieving greater reconciliation between indigenous and non indigenous people in the Clarence Valley.

STATEMENT OF RECONCILIATION

"The Clarence Valley Council declares its public commitment to work towards achieving reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous people of the Clarence Valley. The Council shares the social justice vision of the former Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation for:

'A united Australia which respects this land of ours; values the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and provides justice and equity for all'

Clarence Valley Council is sorry for the hurt and distress caused by past policies which forcibly removed Aboriginal children from their families and homes, which are still having a negative impact on the social, economic, health and well-being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Clarence Valley Council acknowledges and recognises:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first peoples of Australia.
- The loss and grief held by Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders caused by alienation from traditional lands, loss of lives and freedom, and the forced removal of children.
- The customs and traditions of Indigenous Australians and their spiritual relationship with the land.
- The right of Indigenous Australians to live according to their own beliefs, values and customs, and the vital importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's contribution to strengthening and enriching the heritage of all Australians.
- The need for a partnership approach with Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander peoples as part of addressing the needs of whole communities.

Clarence Valley Council supports:

- The vision as expressed by the former Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation of a "united Australia which respects this land of ours; values the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and provides justice and equity for all."
- Indigenous and non-indigenous Australians working together for a national agreement or other instrument of reconciliation.
- The need to improve non-indigenous understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues and find new ways to work together in partnership to ensure the principles of equity and access for all members of the Indigenous community to culturally appropriate services and programs.

Clarence Valley Council commits to:

- Developing and promoting, as appropriate, Indigenous involvement in events and celebrations of significance, which respect the dignity and protocols of the local indigenous community, for example, inviting Elders to welcome participants to events.
- Taking effective action on issues of social, environmental and economic concern as identified in the Clarence Valley Social Plan, where they fall within the sphere of interest and responsibility of the Clarence Valley Council.
- Promoting and participating in education processes, which enhance the increased acknowledgement, understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage and the needs of indigenous communities.
- Developing strategies that improve the level of participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in local government at all levels."

IAN TILEY
MAYOR

Item: 17.2 PACIFIC HIGHWAY SUMMIT

REPORT SUMMARY

That Council engage in initiatives to secure early completion of the Pacific Highway to dual carriageway standard.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council nominate the Mayor and Director of Engineering Services to participate in a task force or similar mechanism for the purpose of obtaining more funding for upgrading the Pacific Highway.

BACKGROUND

THE Northern Rivers Regional Organisation of Councils held a Pacific Highway Summit at Ballina on Friday, 6 May 2005. The Hon Ian Causley MP addressed the Summit, representing the deputy Prime Minister. A copy of his speaking notes is attached. Also in attendance were State MPs Don Page, Thomas George and Steve Cansdell and representatives of a number of local councils.

It was disappointing that, given there are 26 local councils affected by the need for a dual carriageway, only a comparatively small proportion of councils attended. It was unfortunate also that there was no representation from the trucking industry or from the State Minister for Roads.

ISSUES

The Summit was informed that approximately 1/3rd of the Pacific Highway from Hexham to the Queensland border had been upgraded to dual carriageway in the last nine years. However, upgrading of the remaining 450km has not occurred and, at current levels of funding by State and Federal Government, completion may take a further 25 years.

The President of NRMA Motoring and Services, Alan Evans, foreshadowed several funding mechanisms which could allow for an accelerated completion of the whole upgrade. He suggested shadow tolling (private sector builds and governments pay over time), government borrowing, infrastructure bonds (potentially attractive to superannuation funds) or about 10% of proceeds of the sale of Telstra. The estimated cost to complete the upgrade in today's terms is \$5.5B.

It is regrettable that the Summit concluded without a determination to form a Task Force or some other process through which this critical issue could be constantly pursued.

Given that approximately one quarter of the 450km section remaining to be completed lies within the Clarence Valley Council area, I consider it to be of paramount importance that Council engage in progressing this matter and play a leadership role. This is the intent of the recommendation.

IAN TILEY
MAYOR