

# TRANSCRIPT

## Ordinary Meeting 23 July 2014

Mayor Eaton: Alright, I'll put it to all those in favour say aye, any against, declared that carried. Ok, we are up to 6.14 Consultancy Services for Additional Morphodynamic Modelling for Tuggerah Lakes. Councillor Taylor, now you've got to be able to spell that.

Cr Taylor Ah yes, well, I can, I can spell it but I'll move it first.

Mayor Eaton Okay, seconded by Councillor Troy.

Cr Taylor Thank you, Mr Mayor I'm going to speak in favour of the, of the recommendation here and say a couple of things. Firstly I guess this goes back, and there's a bit of history behind this, Councillor Troy and myself were voted in at the last election on the basis and the platform of saving Tuggerah Lakes. Saving Tuggerah Lakes was a, to use Councillor Best term, a bowl of vomit. But the reality was it was pretty bad. It smelt and it was awful. Out of all of this, and the Estuary Management Committee, numbers of things have happened. Different levels of government have realised the importance the community places on the lakes system and the environment that they live in. out of this also came the break wall study. The break wall study was, was brought out and determined that it wasn't going to make a great deal of change to the lake. But it also says in there that the entry channel depth is approximately 300mm so that's a foot in the old term or very, very shallow, knee, less than knee deep. So the reality is the exchange of water between the ocean and the lakes will always be negligible. So here, out of all of this and out of the Estuary Management Committee that I'm co-chaired with by Councillor Troy, this recommendation has come forward to go back to the modelling agents Cardno to request that they come up with a new model study based on deepening the channel with the break wall, with the break wall going on either side of the channel and a depth of the channel up to some, the total of 5 metres. So, three different levels. And that's not going, that's going to do a lot of benefit to the lake. Not only in terms of water, water exchange, but it's also going to allow, in the flood events, the water to release, be released from the, the lake very very easily but not only that, we will have access from the ocean to the lake, we'll have boating opportunities, we'll have tourist opportunities, we'll have, we'll have The Entrance and that area just truly develop into a fantastic, vibrant area. We've got billions of dollars' worth of investment possibly coming through with different developments around that particular region. And wow, if we can get this type of tourist entry into The Entrance, we've got something that's fantastic. So, tonight we're voting on approving the spending of some money to go out to, to go back to Cardno and get this report done to determine what positive effects or what effects are going to be received from this modelling by deepening the channel.

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Mayor Eaton

Thank you. Councillor Troy.

Cr Troy

Yes, thank you Mr Mayor. Thank you Councillor Taylor for bringing this to Council's attention. It was apparent to myself and others that the briefing that Cardno gave at the Ward Forum at Diggers at The Entrance the B Ward, that deepening the channel wasn't part of their brief. Their brief was to study the effects of two fully entrained sea walls at The Entrance at various widths. We were advised that any flooding that takes place in the lake is basically strained by the depth of the channel and we've got advice that the depth of the channel varies from .3m up to 1.5m at high tide. Now, the staff have requested quotes, six different quotes. A fully, a fully trained entrance, 150m wide at mean sea level and water depths between 2m, 3.5m and 5m at, at low water level. A report with no training walls and water depths between 2m, 3.5m and 5m at mean water level. This is going to facilitate extra flow in and out of the lake and it'll have a huge difference on the water quality in that immediate area but also the boating potential, we may be able to have whale watching take place off the Central Coast. We have had celebrated accounts of whales coming very close in shore. Even just recently I was at Norah Head Lighthouse with some other Councillors and we were treated to a whale that was less than 50m off the rock shelf and, and there's a huge number of people out there enjoyed that day. Wouldn't it be great if we could actually have whale watching tours taking place from The Entrance. People getting on boats, spending money locally boosting the economy. I believe that there may be an opportunity to deepen the channel with may be even not having training walls built. It depends on what the Cardno study comes back and says but anything that's going to try and lower the level of the peak flood level of the lake during heavy rain fall periods is probably going to make a big difference to people's peace of mind when they're worried about whether their house is going to be flooded, whether they're going to be covered by insurance or not and I believe this is a direction that we at Council and as elected members need to keep in mind and Councillor Taylor and myself have been very passionate about this and we've been supported by the other councillors, very appreciative of this, and we've made a huge difference. There's a lot of good things that have been happening and I think this is just another in a long line of them. Thank you.

Mayor Eaton

Thank you. Oops, Councillor Greenwald.

Cr Greenwald

Yes, thank you. My question is to the Director of Infrastructure and Operations. The cost of this I see it's in the range of \$16,000 upwards, do we have a definitive scale on this?

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- Mr MacDonald Yes that's the range from a number of different consultants. We'll more than likely be taking the lowest of those.
- Cr Greenwald The lowest one. Would this type of investigation usually be done by Council or would usually, the lakes are state government responsibility. Where do we actually fit in?
- Mr McDonald As we've sort of I guess expressed that, this concern before, whilst the lakes are the state governments, there's no state government funding. Council's taken that responsibility on because it recognises I guess the commercial and economic benefits the lakes provide to the shire.
- Cr Greenwald If we did the study and it recommended that we lower the channel and could we actually afford the the capital works that would flow on from that?
- Mr McDonald We'd need to actually understand what that capital works is. We don't know that yet but part of the study would identify the cost of removing that rock as well I would hope and then we could then seek funding.
- Cr Greenwald Okay so we could actually be spending this money, just do a study and then it be just put on the book shelf.
- Mr McDonald Well the intent is that once you know whether this works or not you may have this as a priority project over and above the sea wall.
- Cr Greenwald Okay. So it is a state government responsibility though. It wouldn't be one we'd, this is one we would actually be going to fund from the state I'd expect. It wouldn't be expected to come from our coffers.
- Mr MacDonald We'd be seeking the state government funding but of course if Council had capital funds that they chose to put into it, there'd there'd be nothing stopping Council from doing that if Council so chose to do so. But our intent would be to probably chase funding for a project of this size.
- Cr Greenwald Okay, thank you. My comments in this regard, I believe yes the work Council has been doing in the lakes, especially in regard to the wrack and that has definitely been showing results though I have some questions in that regard as well. The redesign of The Entrance channel, though it is a wish that the community comes back to us with, I believe it sits squarely with the state. We are a shire Council, we do have, we're the care takers of the lake and we do those type of things that care takers do which we do the preparation and we do the clean ups and all those type of things. But the major things like break walls, lowering of channels and even investigations, should really sit squarely with the local members.

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Cr Greenwald  
(Contd)

And it's the local member of The Entrance or Wyong who should be making those representations and getting us the funding so we can do those investigations. So from my point of view, I think there may be some merit in it, but I just don't think it should be Council funding that's doing it. Thank you.

Mayor Eaton

Thank you. Councillor Best.

Cr Best

Oh, thanks Doug. I would like a dollar for every time I've risen to discuss this little matter hey? It is a bit of a chestnut. I'll be positive. Look, I've put numerous matters on this to the Chamber over the years to seek some kind of formal structuring around that channel. I applaud Councillor Taylor and, and, and Adam, Councillor Troy. These guys have come in here with a fresh look at things to really give this a shakeup. The previous Chairman of the Estuary Management Committee with forty members of the Committee, you can imagine forty people trying to make a decision. It'd be like, you know, the Irishman painting a house, you know. So, that was a nonsense, it was a talk fest and a farce and nothing happened. And I think that Committee actually stymied the lakes future direction and slowed it down. And that's harsh criticism but numerous times we put to that Committee the prospect of trialling geo-bags, which are those long spaghetti's of sand, which can be removed at any time, to just understand this exact situation of this very long word, hydro whatever it's called. Morphology, whatever it is. Anyway, I can't even pronounce it Lloyd. So that's what we tried to do 15 years ago, 10 years ago, 20 years ago. But Councillor Graham, who got into the Council about 13 years ago basically placed himself like a lobster in a hole, not coming out, very opinionated about issues like this and basically

Cr Graham

Point of order Mr Mayor

Mr Mayor

Yep. What did you say Councillor Best? Sorry

Cr Best

I said Councillor Graham, like a lobster in a hole, very intransient and not wanting to consider other things

Mr Mayor

Like a lobster in a hole, very intransient, hmmm

Mr Whittaker

He's taken offence

Mayor Eaton

He's taken offence. Alright, you can rephrase that Councillor Best.

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Cr Best

I can rephrase that Mr Mayor. Councillor Graham just chose not to even consider other options, basically dismissing any discussions and telling me personally, that while he was in the job, there'd be no break wall, no sea wall, no training walls, no engineering action in the channel, whilst he is on the job. So that's a fairly open mind I suppose, someone who's prepared to look at new technologies, new horizons and new opportunities. So that's the style I suppose, in your eighth decade Bob, I suppose that settles in after a while. Look, we've got to be progressive here. I don't care what age you are, you've got to be prepared for change. You've got to be prepared to look at new things. This is not new but technology is improving. Adam talked about boats, just cursory comment. But let me tell you, the boating market, around the big tin area, which is the 6 – 7 metre off shore ocean boats, is a gold mine for expenditure and tourism and Port Stephens is enjoying miles of them in their fishing tournaments. If you see a Port Stephens fishing tournament or you've been up there, and we've been up there before, there's just a conga line of boats going to sea. 6 and 7 metre tins can cross that bar at around a metre and a half depth. You aren't going to put cruisers out there, through possible breaking surf, but you're gonna put those boats out there and just that alone is absolutely millions and millions of dollars of, of economic growth and opportunity from a fishing point of view. It turns every single lake boat ramp into an ocean boat ramp, every lake ramp. You can pop your boat in at Chittaway, go across the channel, out to sea, put out the rod, pick up the tailor, pick up the tuna, pick up the big fish going by, come back in a moor at Chittaway. That's what this does. But no, the former committee says we're not even going to explore it. We're not even going to consider it. Geo-bag technology's been around for a long long time and this might be part of it when we get these studies back. So we've come a long way in the lake and I must give the boys credit for where we are. I genuinely think the lakes improving and many are telling me that. I've resided on the lake front for nearly 30 years and honestly, in the bad old days when the State Government and I think the Member for The Entrance, as I think we've been told a million times, got \$15 million single handedly, no one else did that and then went and spent it on timber fishing platforms and sucking out sand and putting them on the beaches and that was fixing the lake. Well after that folly, I would of think you would, kind of crawl under a rock and die of shame but no, we're gonna chair the committee for the next 7 or 8 years and still put us in the dark ages. Well, the ages have brightened up, thank you Save Tuggerah Lakes.

Mayor Eaton

Councillor Taylor, right of reply.

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- Cr Taylor Thank you Mr Mayor. Look, I I don't think I need to say much more on it. A lot has been said but I'd like to finish the debate on the positive note and that is by going out to the community, by going out and doing this study, we can get the information to hopefully push forward the break wall, the money would be coming from state government but if we can get the information then at least we can make the decisions, the judgement decisions and the valued judgement decisions to begin moving forward to get the positive aspects done. Thank you.
- Mayor Eaton Thank you. Okay I out the motion, all those in favour say aye. Any against? Councillor Greenwald against. Do you wish your name recorded Councillor Greenwald?
- Cr Greenwald (Inaudible)
- Mayor Eaton Thank you. I declare it carried. Okay. Next item. Cr Matthews is still here I assume. Her bags are there. Yep. Next item is the carbon tax repeal. Item 6.16 Councillor Nayna
- Cr Nayna: Thank you Mr Mayor, it gives me great delight and moving a motion, can I have a seconder
- Mayor Eaton: Seconder? Councillor Best
- Cr Nayna: Well wasn't Thursday a great day for Australia. Wasn't it a day that was overdue! The back of Labour's insidious job destroying carbon tax. The back of economic vandalism in the carbon tax was finally repealed by the federal parliament and although it took some time and some negotiating with some colourful characters its been done and now the responsibility falls to us as Wyong Shire Councillors to remove the carbon tax form our ratepayers so this motion before the Council here today clearly outlines the cost of the carbon tax to every single ratepayer and every single person who acts at our garbage waste facilities on the Central Coast. We will be seeing a reduction in fees to the tip and a reduction in waste management costs. Now for too long people have blindly supported the carbon tax as though it was the great environmental saviour been longing for but it didn't work and we can see here in Wyong Shire Council that what works when it comes to the environment is practical works we've seen carried out on our lakes not money wasted up in the estuaries, on management plans, on consultation and cute video clips to play at the cinemas before movies. People want to get our hands dirty and that's why I am very pleased to see that Wyong Shire Council will be benefitting from the federal governments green army program with 3 projects to commence in the coming months.