



# MINUTES

Operations Committee

held at

Council Administration Centre  
Committee Room  
180 Mort Street, Lithgow

on

Thursday 2 February 2023

at 4:00 PM

# ORDER OF BUSINESS

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The Chairperson declared the meeting open at 4:04 pm.

## **1. Acknowledgement of Country**

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## **2. Present**

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Cr Stuart McGhie (Chair)  
Cr Deanna Goodsell  
Cr Stephen Lesslie  
Cr Col O'Connor  
Cr Eric Mahony  
Cr Almudena Bryce

Officers:

Craig Butler - General Manager  
Jonathon Edgecombe - Director Infrastructure Services  
Matthew Trapp - Executive Manager Water and Waste Water  
Kaitlin Cibulka - Minutes

## **3. Apologies**

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Cr Maree Statham

## **4. Confirmation of Minutes**

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The minutes of the Operations Committee Meeting held on 6th October 2022 were presented to the Council on 24th October 2022.

### **ACTION**

**THAT** the Minutes of the meeting of be taken as read and confirmed.

**MOVED:** Councillor D Goodsell

**SECONDED:** Councillor C O'Connor

## **5. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes**

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The Chair called for any matters arising from previous minutes.

No matters were raised.

## **6. Declaration of Interest**

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There were no declarations of pecuniary interest made.

## **7. Staff Reports**

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## 7.1. Operations Committee - Terms of Reference

Over the last nine months Council’s “operations” areas have been impacted and increased in scope by a number of elements which have broadened the programs and brought complexity:

- Numerous disaster declarations requiring diversion of resources to the task of recovery
- Weather impacting on the deterioration of Council’s roads, wastewater and stormwater assets
- A number of grants for large projects have been received
- The IWCM and the Clarence Water Scheme project have been advanced to a point which required Ops Committee engagement

Given the above increase in operations matters, the administration has suggested that there would be merit in the committee meeting 6 times annually, on a two monthly cycle. A return to a monthly meeting schedule is not recommended because that leaves little more than one week before the next round of business paper reports are required to be prepared. This view is reinforced by the experience that reports under this previous cycle included much less valuable detail or comprised verbal reports.

Hence, the Committee has suggested Council consider trialling a bi-monthly cycle wherein the meeting is held every two months. This will ensure sufficient time to develop reports while also increasing the frequency of meetings.

It is proposed that the following timetable of meetings be implemented moving forward:

<b>Operations Committee</b>
Thursday 02 February 2023
Tuesday 04 April 2023
Tuesday 06 June 2023
Tuesday 01 August 2023
Tuesday 03 October 2023
Tuesday 05 December 2023

Cr S Lesslie disagreed with the Committee’s view and suggested that meetings occur monthly.

### **ACTION**

**THAT** the Committee Receive, discuss and endorse the proposed change of the Terms of Reference (moving Committee meetings to bi-monthly according to the above schedule) for referral to Council for adoption.

**MOVED:** Councillor D Goodsell

**SECONDED:** Councillor C O'Connor

**CARRIED:** Division

**For:** Cr C O'Connor , Cr S McGhie,  
Cr D Goodsell

**Against:** Cr S Lesslie

## 7.2. Wolgan Valley - Review of Slope Hazards Jan. 2022

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The Director of Infrastructure Services provided an overview of the report noting that the road has been closed due to slope instability for a length of approximately 2km, adjacent to the Wolgan Gap. It was advised that Alternate Alignment Constraints Study has been carried out (report attached to the Committee agenda) indicating that a detailed assessment of four corridors has been completed.

This process has resulted in the preliminary identification of the Southern Corridor as the most reasonable approach to realign the road, through consideration of the environment, engineering constraints and cost.

The Committee also discussed the ongoing completion of a condition and slope risk assessment report to compare the feasibility of a large-scale repair or alternatively, the construction of a new road. The committee were advised that investigations show that there is a tension crack that is approximately 30 meters in length and is dropping a large amount of loose material. It was noted that on the high side of Wolgan Road it has dropped approximately 1.5m, and that there are over 100 other hazards impacting the asset. Once the report is received it will be presented to government and Council experts for peer review prior to discussion at a Councillor information session and subsequently, report to an Ordinary Meeting of Council.

Ongoing communication with the community was also discussed. The Committee agreed that current measures are acceptable, including minuted meetings held every week online with all residents invited. Three (3) on site meetings have also been held in the valley when specific milestones have been completed. Residents have been provided a dedicated email address to contact the administration as well as direct contacts for the Director Infrastructure Services / Transport Manager and the Manager of Community and Culture. A dedicated webpage has also been created to place the most up to date information

### **ACTION**

**THAT** the committee receive and discuss the report on the current status, repairability and future management of the existing Wolgan Road, adjacent to the Wolgan Gap.

**MOVED:** Councillor D Goodsell

**SECONDED:** Councillor C O'Connor

**CARRIED:** Unanimously

## 7.3. Rural Road Rehabilitation Tender

~~As a result of the significant rainfall throughout 2022, many of Lithgow's roads have fallen into disrepair with the required works to restore them ranging from minor patching to extensive rehabilitation. Works have occurred in the Lithgow township and some sections out of the township to restore many sections of road.~~

While Council continues to maintain and patch the rural road network as this tender package was publicised and assessed, it is understood that the works will only offer short term relief. In many

cases, the surface damage reflects the underlying pavement saturation and permanent damage. To implement a long-term repair in these areas, the pavement requires removal, stabilisation, reconstruction and reseal. This is the scope of work suggested below.

Through discussion, the committee was advised of the results of two separate tender processes to appoint several contractors and accept a schedule of rates for the rehabilitation of segments of the Lithgow City Council rural road network. Both an open and a closed tender process was used to maximise the likelihood of contractor responses while also resulting in an equitable distribution of labour.

The planned works are a combination of stabilisation and patching works with many sections of road requiring full rehabilitation. It is intended to award the works to multiple contractors to speed up the rectification of the rural roads and have projects completed concurrently rather than consecutively.

Cr A Bryce requested an update on Brown Gap Road closure. It was advised that there are four separate concerns affecting the stability of the road, with the highest priority being significant mine subsidence within the roadside. This is a complex issue and Council are working with the mine subsidence board and its consultants to determine a timeframe for repair, so that this information can be provided to the community.

Cr D Goodsell suggested a letter box drop to residents in the area to give them further information on the matter. It was advised that a webpage and media releases are in development to provide information on the situation.

## **ACTION**

**THAT** the Operations Committee note the report detailing tender progress on Council's disaster recovery efforts.

**MOVED:** Councillor C O'Connor

**SECONDED:** Councillor D Goodsell

**CARRIED:** Unanimously

## **7.4. Policy 3.1 - Water meter and Service Installation**

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The Executive Manager Water and Wastewater gave an update on the review of the policy noting there has been changes in the Local Government Act and policy needed to be align with this making it clearer in relation to connections in the LGA. It was noted that there has been approximately 30 Development Applications lodged for Dwelling / Dual Occupancies that require a water connection. The change would see Strata units carrying their own access charge / usage charge rather than just one charge as it currently is now and conditioned on the development consent that all individual units are individually metered.

Cr D Goodsell asked how this task has been done previously. It was noted that this has never consistently been applied in the past. The current policy provisions for for secondary dwellings but not for strata developments.

Cr S Lesslie noted that this would be valuable for the body corporate to determine which meter is causing the issue and it is a very sensible move.

Owners of affected developments will be approached and notified of this proposed change.

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Cr A Bryce asked what the current access charge is. It was confirmed that residents pay \$385 per year.

It was also noted that the smart meters are great at detecting that a leak is occurring at a property. Residents can sign up for "MiWater" system and can confirm contact details for when a leak is detected, Council can make contact as soon as possible to advise that a leak has been detected.

Cr A Bryce asked why water bills are not treated like gas bills in that renters have access and get the bill rather than the owner of the property or estate manager. The Executive Manager Water and Wastewater advised that this would have to be taken on notice for further advice.

Cr S Lesslie asked about the process for repairing meters if one is faulty. It was advised that an investigation would take place, and it is common that the meter be replaced with a new one rather than repair.

Cr E Mahony advised that many covers were changed from metal to plastic and noted with the flooding many residents lost their covers. The Executive Manager Water and Wastewater noted that the metal lids in some areas block the signal from the meter to the towers therefore were replaced with plastic covers. Residents can contact Council to get a replacement if they have been swept away by flooding.

## **ACTION**

**THAT** the Committee receive and discuss the report and the matter be returned for further consideration after modelling of the changes is completed.

**MOVED:** Councillor C O'Connor

**SECONDED:** Councillor S McGhie

**CARRIED:** Unanimously

## **7.5. Sewer Infiltration and management strategies**

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The Executive Manager of Water and Wastewater advised that this report is an update. It was noted that a large amount rain over a certain period has caused issues within the sewer network.

The committee were advised that a remediation and smoke testing package is to be carried out again to identify areas of infiltration.

Under Resources for Regions Round 9 approximately \$400,000.00 has been allocated to carry out works in Extension Estate to remove ground water infiltration into the sewer system. It was advised that in this particular section there are still clay pipes that must be either relined or replaced. Relining is a more cost effective option then replacing.

Cr D Goodsell asked why this estate has been prioritised. It was advised that this is the predominant location for flooding and stormwater infiltration in the event of heavy rain.

The General Manager also noted that a large advert will be placed in the local paper with highlights of projects occurring in the area.

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It was noted that this program has been successful in the past years with many illegal connections being identified. Council now have the equipment and have been trained to perform this process in house, however, may need to consider contractors to expedite the process.

Cr E Mahony agreed with the testing be done by staff to keep the knowledge in house.

Cr A Bryce asked about the process if an illegal connection is discovered. It was advised that smoke testing occurs with a report of where the smoke has been found. The property owner is sent a letter and given six (6) months to have the illegal connection disconnected and reconnected to the stormwater. After this six-month period a retest of the area will be conducted to confirm that the works have occurred. If no works have occurred further correspondence will be sent to get this matter resolved by serving an order. After a period if no action has been taken Council will carry out a disconnect / reconnection and the cost will be charged to the property owner.

Cr E Mahony suggested that an investigation occur to consider incentivising residents to check and disconnect illegal connections, like they have done with the coal burner reduction in previous years. Many residents have purchase properties not knowing that there is an illegal connection. The Executive Manager Water and Wastewater took this matter on notice, committing to provide further information once an investigation has occurred.

## **ACTION**

**THAT** the committee receive the report.

**MOVED:** Councillor C O'Connor

**SECONDED:** Councillor D Goodsell

**CARRIED:** Unanimously

## **7.6. Operational Plan - Major Projects Progress**

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The Director Infrastructure Services advised the Committee that this report is an update on the progress of projects

- Main Street Revitalisation

It was advised that further funding has been confirmed for this project. Planning stages of this project are completed with a concept design plan to be put out to the community this month prior to the tender. Minor works will be carried out before the bulk of the works that will be commencing next financial year. Business owners in the Main Street will also be consulted and able to provide comment on the design works.

Cr D Goodsell asked about the Floodplain Risk Management Committee. The Director of Infrastructure Services noted that this project is not one managed by his department however has taken this on notice for a response to be provided by the correct department.

Cr A Bryce asked about the status of the Rydal Toilet Block. The Director of Infrastructure Services noted that Council is awaiting on approval for the lease with UGL (Railway Corridor) , once this permission has been granted work will take approximately 6 weeks. Residents will also be notified before works are carried out.

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Cr C O'Connor asked about the bridge at Marrangaroo. It was noted that a development application will come to Council in relation to this matter.

## **ACTION**

**THAT** the Committee receive the attached reports which overview key projects and their status.

**MOVED:** Councillor C O'Connor

**SECONDED:** Councillor D Goodsell

**CARRIED:** Unanimously

## **8. General Business**

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The matter of mowing of Council verges was raised and it was advised that in conjunction with staff contractors are commencing on Monday 13th February 2023.

Cr C O'Connor noted that weed spraying is required in the LGA. It was advised that a meeting with UMCC is scheduled for Tuesday to discuss moving Councils forward to a three (3) yearly schedule as under the current framework only certain roadside have been picked. This new agreement will see the LGA being split into 3 quadrants and be able to better service the rural areas.

Cr S Lesslie also noted the risk in breaching the Bio Security act. It was also advised that UMCC also changing its focus and promoting themselves more as a weeds Council with residents will be more aware on who to direct complaints to.

The Director Infrastructure Services also noted that a training course is being carried out to provide staff knowledge to reduce risk of spreading risk with the first training scheduled for 20th February 2022. A briefing session will also be provided to the Operations Committee meeting scheduled (pending resolution of the amended Terms of Reference) for April 2023.

## **9. Meeting Close**

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Next Meeting: TBC

There being no further business the Chairperson declared the meeting closed at 5:50 pm.