

## 6. Tathra Wharf Restaurant, Museum and Hall – review of management arrangements

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As part of the current comprehensive review of Council's Section 355 Committees, specific attention has been given to the current management arrangements for the Tathra wharf restaurant, museum and hall. Various actions regarding the future management are now recommended.

**Group Manager, Community and Relationships**

### BACKGROUND

10 The Tathra Wharf is an iconic landmark that provides important heritage, recreational and tourism outcomes. Significant funds and effort have recently been invested by Council, other levels of government and local people to ensure the ongoing stability and availability of this facility.

Whilst the entire wharf forms part of the Tathra Foreshore Reserve, its management can be viewed as an amalgamation of three distinct elements. These are: the decking area, the restaurant area and the museum area. This report deals only with the restaurant and museum areas, both of which are located in the warehouse building on the wharf.

20 The restaurant area, located downstairs is subject to a 10 year lease arrangement consisting of an initial five year term with an option for a further five years. The lessee is currently in the fifth year of the initial lease period.

The museum area, located upstairs is currently managed by the Tathra Hall and Wharf Museum Management Committee. This is a Section 355 committee with responsibility for both the Tathra Public Hall and the Wharf Museum.

Council officers are currently undertaking a comprehensive review of all Council committees constituted under Section 355 of the NSW Local Government Act (1993).

In recent times a number of management issues have been raised and the review process provided an opportunity to bring all the stakeholders together and see if management alternatives could be developed that addressed these issues.

30 A meeting of stakeholders was conducted on Monday 23 March and included representatives from:

- Tathra Hall and Wharf Museum Management Committee
- Lessees of the Tathra Wharf restaurant
- The Pig and Whistle Fleet Incorporated

- Council's Corporate, Asset Management, Cultural Services and Contract Management sections
- Cr Seckold, as Chair of the General Halls Committee

All stakeholders attending the meeting agreed that a report should be prepared to Council that made a series of recommendations regarding the future management of the restaurant, museum and hall.

40 The recommendations were:

1. That the restaurant and museum be physically separated, by closing off the internal stairs.
2. That Council progress the option of having the museum managed by an incorporated body, such as the Pig and Whistle Incorporated.
3. That the existing Tathra Hall and Wharf Museum Management Committee be subsequently reconstituted to only have responsibility for the Tathra Public Hall.

The following sections of this report will deal with the various issues that would result if Council were to resolve to implement these recommendations.

## ISSUES

50 **Legal**

The adopted Plan of Management for the Tathra Wharf identifies the activities that are permissible in the wharf building. The proposed recommendations maintain the existing uses of the areas within the building as both restaurant and museum spaces.

Irrespective of the recommended shift to an incorporated management body the physical separation of the two functions is recommended as it addressed a significant access issue. Currently the museum can only be open when the restaurant is open.

60 The existing lease would be modified to remove the current requirement that the Lessee pay the amount of \$2,500 annually to the Museum as an estimated entry fee amount collected by them. Under any new arrangement with the museum management body, entry fees would have to be collected by that body.

Other museums in the Shire are currently managed by incorporated bodies, operating under agreement with Council. Management by an incorporated body clarifies issues such as insurance liability, grant seeking, financial management, collection administration and day to day management requirements.

It is recommended that an open 'Expression of Interest' process be undertaken to enable interested groups to put forward a case to take on the management of the Wharf Museum.

70 Council is permitted under Section 355 of the Local Government Act to reconstitute the existing committee to the Tathra Hall Management Committee. This would have the additional benefit of bring this hall into line with the adopted management structure for all other halls in the Shire.

### **Asset**

Physical separation of the building will require the provision of separate electricity and security systems. The recently installed fire suppression system will remain as it is currently formatted. Access to the museum will need to be upgraded to allow disabled access and to comply with evacuation regulations.

### **Social / Cultural/ Heritage**

80 Physical separation of the building by closing off and/or removal of the stairs can be undertaken and maintain the heritage character of the building. The existing stairs are a more recent addition and are not of the same vintage as the rest of the building.

### **Strategic**

Implementation of the recommendations provides for a number of strategic outcomes. The recommendations provide clarity for the three distinct functions that are performed by the restaurant, museum and hall. Specific interests and energies of individuals can be more targeted and therefore deliver better outcomes.

### **Consultation**

All stakeholders have been consulted regarding the development of a preferred future management structures for the Tathra Wharf restaurant, museum and hall.

### **Financial**

90 Costs associated with the physical separation of the restaurant from the museum should be undertaken from funds currently held for the museum by the Tathra Hall and Wharf Museum Management Committee, a current balance of \$4,080.92. The substantial costs associated with electricity supply and security systems will be negotiated with the eventual management body resolved by Council.

### **Resources (including staff)**

Staff from Council's asset management section will be required to identify mechanisms to physically separate the restaurant and museum spaces and to oversee the resulting works. Corporate management and cultural services staff will undertake the EOI process and further reporting to Council.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

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1. That Council identify and cost mechanisms for the physical separation of the Tathra Wharf Restaurant and Museum and that the General Manager be

authorised to execute the necessary works to effect the separation within the balance of committee funds held.

2. That Council advertise for Expressions of Interest from incorporated bodies to provide management of the upstairs portion of the Tathra Wharf building for the purposes of conducting a maritime museum and that a further report to Council be prepared to consider these expressions of interest.
3. That Council agree in principle to the reconstitution of the existing Tathra Hall and Wharf Museum Management Committee but this action be deferred until a further report on the incorporation model is presented.