



Notice of Facilities Committee Meeting

A Facilities Committee Meeting` will be held in the Ballina Shire Council Chambers, 40 Cherry Street, Ballina on **Monday 15 February 2016 commencing at 4.00 pm.**

Business

1. Apologies
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Deputations
4. Committee Reports

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Hickey', with a horizontal line underneath.

Paul Hickey
General Manager

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1. Apologies
 2. Declarations of Interest
 3. Deputations
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1. Apologies

2. Declarations of Interest

3. Deputations

4.1 Ballina Indoor Sporting and Recreation Facility - Update

4. Committee Reports

4.1 Ballina Indoor Sporting and Recreation Facility - Update

Delivery Program Community Facilities and Services

Objective To invite the Council's consideration and discussion concerning options for the development of a proposed indoor sporting and recreation facility in Ballina.

Background

A proposal to construct a multi-purpose indoor sporting and recreational facility in Ballina has been an ambition of successive Councils over a considerable period.

Council has previously commissioned a needs analysis to ascertain the demand for a new indoor facility and to gain an understanding of the projected future needs of the various sporting codes and other groups which might benefit from and utilise such a facility.

This preliminary work was conducted on Council's behalf by the Strategic Leisure Group. A key finding of the research in relation to indoor sporting facilities was that *"Ballina has a shortfall in community and school access to suitable indoor sports courts to service basketball, netball, volleyball, badminton and indoor soccer (futsal)"*.

Whilst this observation was made by the Strategic Leisure Group as part of its feasibility work in 2008, it is fair to say that the circumstances have probably not changed in 2015. In this regard, Council has continued planning for indoor sporting facilities in Ballina and has the concept embedded in various policy documents including the Ballina Shire Section 94 Contributions Plan 2008 and the draft Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy (currently in the final phases of preparation).

In relation to the proposed indoor sporting facility, it is acknowledged that representatives of basketball have been the principal advocates for its establishment. However, the Council has recognised that a new building of this kind must be versatile enough to cater for a range of sporting and recreational activities.

In investigating this matter, Council has considered a number of sites on which to build a new facility. These sites have included the former Council depot on Tamarind Drive, Kingsford Smith Reserve (both of which comprise Crown Land), Gallans Road land, Treelands Reserve, land adjacent to Ballina Heights Estate, land within Southern Cross Industrial Estate and land within Ferngrove Estate (all of which comprised Council-owned sites). Council has also previously examined the acquisition of privately owned land, which was seen at the time as having some distinct locational advantages.

4.1 Ballina Indoor Sporting and Recreation Facility - Update

Since 2011, the Council has been working with consultants PDT Architects in relation to this project, looking at both the siting and design options for this facility. Available Councillors and staff accompanied PDT Architects representatives in visiting a number of indoor facilities to gain a better understanding of these options, management arrangements and, importantly, capital and operating costs.

Further, on the basis that the matter is a key initiative of the Council and a significant issue for the local community, some examination of options and ideas for indoor sporting infrastructure has also been undertaken as part of the Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy project.

In addition, some Councillors have had the opportunity to inspect indoor facilities in Byron Bay and Casino in recent months. This has been beneficial to get a feel for different cost options and building configurations.

The redevelopment of the Ballina High School by the NSW State Government has also recently become of relevance to Council's intentions to progress an indoor sporting facility. The Department of Education and Communities has invited discussion with Council about opportunities for joint venture arrangements to deliver an indoor sporting facility on the high school site that might meet the community's needs.

Staff have been liaising with the Department in relation to the high school redevelopment and as part of this have been gathering information about possible joint venture initiatives and associated options for delivery.

The purpose of this report is to consider the pursuit of a joint venture arrangement with the NSW Government to facilitate delivery of an indoor sporting facility in Ballina.

Key Issues

- Provision of community infrastructure
- Opportunities for cost-sharing and efficient use of resources
- Overall cost and impact on Council's finances

Information

Recent Council Decisions

In June 2014 the Council determined that it would take no further action concerning the identification of a preferred site for the proposed indoor sports facility, until the outcomes of the current State Government review of the Crown Lands legislation is known. This position was taken, as the review has the potential to significantly improve the feasibility of utilising Crown Land as the preferred location for this facility.

Recent indications are that the Crown Land management review has been concluded by the Department. It is conceivable that steps will now be taken for the relevant legislative framework to be put in place to facilitate some areas of Crown land being transferred to other organisations, including local councils. Unfortunately a timeframe for this to occur is uncertain.

4.1 Ballina Indoor Sporting and Recreation Facility - Update

In June 2015, a further Council resolution was made in relation to the proposed indoor facility, as follows:

- 1. That Council commence the process of preparing the designs and a development application for a four court indoor sport and cultural facility immediately, with this work to be expended from the funds currently available for this project;*
- 2. That the designs are to allow for the construction of a two/three court facility and the future expansion to four courts;*
- 3. That the plans are to be based on the preferred site being Council owned land at Gallans Road or the Southern Cross Industrial Estate. The initial evaluation is to assess which is the optimum site for this facility with that evaluation to be reported back to the Council for direction;*
- 4. That the General Manager is to provide a report on funding options for this scale facility, with options including the use of reserve funds, land sales;*
- 5. That Council continue to pursue additional grants and funding opportunities through State and Federal Government throughout the development process for this facility. If State or Federal funding opportunities become available Council will consider options to bring forward provisions into the development such as the introduction of the two additional courts.*

Following this, PDT Architects was engaged to undertake an analysis of the Gallans Road and Southern Cross Industrial Estate siting options.

Of the two options examined, Gallans Road emerged as a preferred site based on the criteria applied by PDT. The company then engaged the services of Steele Wrobel Quantity Surveyors to ascertain an estimate of costs to construct a three court facility (with an option for a fourth court) on the preferred site.

It was estimated that the three court option would cost a minimum of \$6.15 million, with this figure excluding any client costs, an allowance for geotechnical or servicing costs or costs for external or internal roading and carparking. These works are likely to add anywhere from \$2m to \$3m, if not more, to the cost of the project, dependent on the level of fill required for the site.

The submitted 'price' for the proposed building alone is indicative only, and Council will need to obtain more detailed costings if we are to seek formal approval and commit to the construction of this proposal.

Cost estimates for the Southern Cross Industrial Estate siting option were not obtained, as it is seen by PDT to be an inferior option when compared to Gallans Road.

It is suggested however that the cost to build this facility on the Southern Cross site may be less, but the extent of that variation would need to be determined.

Although the Council's resolution of June 2015 provides that a development application for the preferred site should be prepared, such action has not commenced.

This is primarily because the entire costs of the development, including all civil works for the Gallans Road site, are yet to be fully compiled.

4.1 Ballina Indoor Sporting and Recreation Facility - Update

The second reason for not proceeding to document a development application at this time is the emergence of an alternative site option for the proposed indoor facility, which has not been formally considered by Council.

This alternative option relates to a joint venture arrangement associated with the redevelopment of the Ballina High School.

Ballina High School Redevelopment Joint Venture

In 2015 representatives of the NSW Department of Education and Communities (DEC) contacted Council to advise of the proposed redevelopment of the Ballina High School site, which is a current commitment of the NSW State Government. Councillors have had an opportunity to meet informally with DEC representatives and the design team to discuss the project.

Whilst DEC's principal focus is to improve educational outcomes for local students with excellent new facilities, it has also indicated its design will incorporate other infrastructure that may be accessible to the general community into the new school. To this extent, Council is seen as a strategic partner for the redevelopment.

Although a number of items of community infrastructure may be considered for this project, it is suggested that a proposed indoor sporting facility could be a priority option, with the main attraction being the site's central location and high level of accessibility within Ballina. Working with DEC on the high school site also presents opportunities around resource and cost sharing that may enable delivery of a facility that might otherwise be difficult for Council to achieve alone.

DEC has indicated that it has an obligation, as part of the redevelopment project, to include a building for indoor sport and recreation usage. This is likely to include at least one dedicated playing court and associated infrastructure (such as storage for example). This area would be dedicated exclusively for student usage during school hours.

The concept is that this building could be substantially enlarged to contain additional playing courts and additional ancillary space which would be available for general community use. A management structure would be negotiated and documented for the day to day operation of the new centre. The additional courts would be funded by Council.

Council has previously undertaken a joint venture with DEC through Southern Cross K-12 School and the shared usage of its indoor sporting space in East Ballina. Council contributed financially toward this space when the school was built and the community continues to have the benefit of the shared access, although the level of commitment to that shared arrangement has diminished over time as public access has been limited due to higher use by the School.

DEC has now invited Council to engage in a planning and negotiation process to see if a mutually beneficial outcome to deliver an indoor sporting facility on the high school site, that is accessible to the Ballina community, can be achieved.

4.1 Ballina Indoor Sporting and Recreation Facility - Update

To this end, the Department is seeking to commence detailed considerations through a design workshop with Council staff in late February or early March. The outcomes of such a workshop would then be used to inform costings, delivery options and management approaches.

This would then allow Council to enter into more defined negotiations on a joint venture arrangement.

In respect to those negotiations, court options that Council could consider are as follows.

Number of Courts	Composition
4	2 funded by Council and no limitation on availability to the community. 2 funded by DEC/NSW State Government, with community use available after school hours.
4	3 funded by Council and no limitation on availability to the community. 1 funded by DEC/NSW State Government, with community use available after school hours.
4	2 funded by Council and no limitation on availability to the community. 1 funded by DEC/NSW State Government, with community use available after school hours. 1 provided through renegotiated access to the Southern Cross School sporting hall.
3	2 funded by Council and no limitation on availability to the community. 1 funded by DEC/NSW State Government, with community use available after school hours.
2	1 funded by Council and no limitation on availability to the community. 1 funded by DEC/NSW State Government, with community use available after school hours.

There are a number of different views on the extent to which the community needs two, three or four courts and the associated ability of the community to pay for such facilities, particularly in the short term.

DEC has undertaken their own research and it is hoped that their report can be distributed to Council prior to this meeting, which indicates that two or three community based courts are adequate for the Ballina Shire, for current and future populations.

This is similar to the advice consistently provided by PDT to Council. However it is also recognised that the elected Council has resolved the preference is for four courts.

DEC has also had very high level quantity surveyor reports prepared for their entire project, and they are placing a current estimate per court at up to \$5m. This is well above estimates provided by PDT and for works undertaken by other councils.

4.1 Ballina Indoor Sporting and Recreation Facility - Update

DEC expect that this figure will reduce as more detailed designs are prepared and the quantity surveyors are provided with more accurate information.

Nevertheless this estimate is important as Council needs to recognise that if we partner with DEC the cost per court will be higher than the so called “tin shed” model, which, for example, Richmond Valley Council adopted for their new two court stadium.

From a Council funding perspective we have no monies allocated in our Long Term Financial Plan for this project. The works are included in the Community Facilities Section 94 Plan however that revenue stream is very small.

One of the financial positives to this joint venture proposal is the possibility that Council will not be required to make its financial contribution to the project until the buildings are finished, which is likely to be during the 2018/19 financial year. There is even the possibility that Council will be able to spread our payment over 2018/19 and 2019/20. This then allows three to four years to source our contribution.

Legal / Resource / Financial Implications

There are no specific legal or financial implications arising from engaging in planning and negotiation with the Department of Education and Communities at this stage. Staff involvement can be managed within the existing work program.

The key issue for Council is funding works that could potentially cost anywhere from \$6m to \$10m for two courts, or more if Council wishes to pursue three courts. It is generally felt that the \$5m per court estimate is excessive and a more realistic figure will be somewhere around \$3m to \$4m. This still means a contribution from Council of up to \$8m.

Also the likely operating costs for this facility could potentially be around \$100,000 plus per annum, excluding depreciation. Additional staff resources would be needed to manage this facility on top of all the other Council owned community buildings. These facilities almost always operate at a loss, which is why they are not provided by the private sector.

It is recognised that the elected Council wishes to pursue four courts and for Council to fund that magnitude of facility on our own land, we are looking at upwards of \$10m, if not more. Therefore, financially, it can be argued that if we can limit our contribution to around \$8m for this joint venture, which would finance two courts, if those two courts were then matched by DEC, the overall goal of achieving four courts would be achieved for our community, with our contribution limited to a reasonable amount.

It is considered that this should be the minimum negotiating position for Council in looking at the joint venture option.

As to funding the capital cost, we will need to look at the use of reserve funds, loans, asset sales or rate increases, or a combination of all four, to finance the works.

4.1 Ballina Indoor Sporting and Recreation Facility - Update

Council's waste management reserve is forecast to generate significant surpluses over the next few years as existing loans are repaid, and subject to Council not undertaking other waste management activities that reserve could assist with funding part of this project.

Loans would not be supported unless additional rate revenue was generated to finance those loans, as is occurring with the swimming pools redevelopment.

Asset sales are also not supported as many of our commercial assets are generating revenue streams for Council and the loss of that revenue stream will impact on our overall financial viability, particularly in respect to the Fit for the Future Program.

One other option is grant funds and with the next round of the National Stronger Regions Fund now open, this project meets the criteria for those grants. This type of project, which involves a partnership of Local and State Government is a very good candidate for Stronger Regions funding and it is recommended, as part of this report, that Council include this project as one of our round three applications.

Two applications are allowed this round and the other project recommended, as per this month's Commercial Services Committee agenda, is the Airport Boulevard Road. For further information on that project refer to that separate agenda.

If Council was able to secure, say \$4m for this project from the National Stronger Regions fund, it would make the project far more viable. Also with three to four years to pay for the works, if Council is unsuccessful this time we can continue to apply in future rounds.

The detailed reports needed for the National Stronger Regions Fund grant applications can be funded from the monies Council currently has available in this year's budget for the indoor sports facilities project (i.e. \$272,400 with \$9,000 expended to date).

In respect to funding the operating cost for this facility, if we are able to steadily allocate funds over three to four years for management, by reallocating monies from other Council services, then this is also achievable.

The final issue that Council needs to consider is the Fit for the Future Program. Fit for the Future reinforces the need for councils to focus on existing asset renewals and by allocating substantial monies to a totally new facility we are going against what is trying to be achieved.

This expenditure will make it harder for Council to meet the Fit for the Future benchmarks as we will have a higher asset base, increased depreciation and higher operating costs to manage the facility.

Consultation

No consultation has been undertaken with the community in relation to the joint venture option.

4.1 Ballina Indoor Sporting and Recreation Facility - Update

More generally, engagement as part of the Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy identified that the provision of an indoor sporting facility in Ballina is a highly desirable outcome for the community.

Options

The options are to continue a dialogue with the DEC or for Council to pursue our own stand-alone facility. If we continue to work with DEC we also need to be clear on the preferred outcomes.

At this point in time there are considered to be a number of benefits in working with DEC, such as the location of the facility, the opportunity for sharing costs and the time available for Council to finance the works. On that basis the preferred approach is to continue the dialogue.

However the minimum negotiation points from Council need to be:

- a) Four court facility with two funded by Council, assuming Council's preference remains for a four court facility
- b) Adequate tenure arrangements to avoid the situation that has now occurred with the Southern Cross School stadium, where public access is limited
- c) Adequate protections to guarantee community access in the long term

Other details such as building maintenance, sharing of operating costs and the actual day to day management can be worked out as the project progresses.

It is also recommended that Council approach our local member, and the Minister for Education, to ensure that we obtain political support for the four court proposal (two courts each).

The final matter is the Southern Cross School facility. Council contributed financially to a significant component of this court and over time our involvement has been lost possibly due to a lack of up front documentation. As part of the current negotiations, an updated agreement should be prepared for community use of that facility as well.

Ideally this will mean that eventually there will be five school based indoor courts with good community access, which combined with the Alstonville Leisure and Entertainment Centre, and the Lennox Head Community Centre, will provide a very high level of service to the community.

The recommendations that follow support this approach.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Council authorises the General Manager to commence planning and negotiations with the Department of Education and Communities with respect to the provision of an indoor sporting facility on the Ballina High School site under a joint venture arrangement. These negotiations are to ensure that adequate community access to the facility is provided at all times and there is adequate tenure protection for Council and the Ballina Shire community.
2. That the Council's negotiations be based on the provision of a four court indoor sporting facility, with the equivalent of two courts to be funded by Council.
3. That the General Manager seek the support of the Member for Ballina and the Minister for Education in relation to the provision of support for the project based on both the Department of Education and Communities and Council providing two courts each.
4. That the General Manager seek grant funding for part of Council's component of this project through round three of the National Stronger Regions Fund grant program.
5. That Council receive a further report on funding options for the capital and operating cost of this facility.
6. That as part of the current negotiations, the General Manager also seek to have a new agreement formalised for the use of the Southern Cross School court that provides adequate community access based on the fact that Council funded a significant component of this facility.

Attachment(s)

Nil

4.2 Ballina Fire Station (Former) Property - Future

4.2 Ballina Fire Station (Former) Property - Future

Delivery Program Community Facilities and Services

Objective To invite discussion concerning options for the future use of the former Ballina Fire Station property located at 60 Crane Street Ballina.

Background

NSW Fire and Rescue (formally NSW Fire Brigades) has operated the Ballina Fire Station at 60 Crane Street since 1928. In 2014 Council acquired the property as part of a negotiation whereby Fire and Rescue would relocate its operations to a site it would acquire from Council in Tamarind Drive. At the time of preparing this report, Fire and Rescue is transitioning to its new facility, with the Crane Street property now having been vacated.

It is considered timely for the Council to contemplate an alternative use for 60 Crane Street. The following report discusses both short and longer term options for the property, noting that there is no allocated budget in the Council's current Operational Plan or Delivery Program for the building's adaptive reuse or site redevelopment.

Key Issues

- Future use of Council-owned property and resources
- Synergies with other adjacent properties.

Information

To enable Councillors to gain an improved appreciation of the buildings which occupy the site, and the property's relationship to others nearby, an inspection of 60 Crane Street has been arranged and will occur immediately prior to the commencement of the Facilities Committee meeting.

The Property

60 Crane Street comprises lots 2 and 3 DP506103 containing an area of 1,106.5m². The land is regular in shape, with an equal frontage of 20.56 metres to both Crane Street and Holden Lane at the rear.

The primary building on the land is the former fire station, which is of brick and tiled-roof construction. A large colorbond clad shed stands between the main building and the western property boundary. Three smaller detached buildings occupy the rear part of the site.

Planning Context

The Ballina Local Environmental Plan 2012 (the BLEP) is the relevant local planning instrument applying to 60 Crane Street, and to the adjacent properties which are described below.

Under the BLEP, the site is zoned B3 Commercial Core as a component of the Ballina Central Business Area. An excerpt from this instrument is attached

4.2 Ballina Fire Station (Former) Property - Future

to this report which sets out the relevant objectives of the plan in relation to land zoned B3, as well as the range of uses which could be contemplated for the site.

The former fire station comprises an item of environmental heritage for the purpose of the BLEP. The extent to which this listing will be a relevant matter for consideration by the Council will largely depend on what uses for the existing building are being proposed, or the extent to which the site might otherwise be redeveloped or modified.

Adjacent Properties

The aerial photograph which accompanies this report illustrates 60 Crane Street's relationship to other adjacent properties. Details of these other properties are provided in the table below. This information serves to highlight the strategic value of the Council's acquisition of 60 Crane Street in an ownership/management context.

	Description	Area	Ownership	Zoning
1.	71 Tamar Street	1,012m ²	Council	B3 (Commercial Core)
2.	40 Cherry Street (Council Chambers)	2,484m ²	Crown Reserve (Head Lease with Council)	B3
3.	42 Cherry Street (former Library)	640m ²	Crown Reserve (Head Lease with Council)	B3
4.	44-46 Cherry Street (Gallery)	1,316m ²	Crown Reserve (Head Lease with Council)	B3
5.	62 Crane Street (Meals on Wheels)	904m ²	Council	R3 (Medium Density Residential)
6.	64 Crane Street (Northcott)	727m ²	Council	R3

Potential Alternative Uses

To date, the Council has not made any decision with regard to the preferred future use of 60 Crane Street, though there have been indications that because of its nature, building style and location, the property could be suited to an arts and/or cultural space, as an extension of or an adjunct to, the Northern Rivers Community Gallery.

The zoning of the property under the provisions of the local environmental plan provide the Council with quite a deal of flexibility in terms of commercial use or redevelopment opportunities. If the Council prefers to seek a commercial return from the property then the matter can be referred to our Commercial Services Section to investigate and report on preferences/options. It is understood that the Section has already received a number of informal enquiries from prospective tenants regarding the building's availability.

Granting a commercial lease over the property for a predetermined period may be an attractive option for the Council, either as a long term investment opportunity or as a shorter term measure (say, for a couple of years) pending alternative uses being explored and funding sources established.

4.2 Ballina Fire Station (Former) Property - Future

On the other hand, if the Council is of the view that an arts or cultural-based usage of the property is preferred, it is suggested that a concept will need to be developed through the engagement of a suitable professional person/firm with expertise in this area, with an appropriate budget allocated.

Council's Manager of Community Facilities and Customer Service and our Gallery Coordinator have recorded some preliminary thoughts on how the fire station property might be adapted for use as an artistic and/or cultural space. These preliminary views are attached to this report simply as a basis for discussion by Councillors.

If a consultant is engaged, it would be vital to liaise with key stakeholders and the broader community to ascertain their views about the adaptive reuse of the principal building and the remainder of the site. Already, Council has received an unsolicited letter from Ballina Arts and Crafts Inc. indicating its support for Council's adaptive reuse of the former fire station as an extension of the Northern Rivers Community Gallery. A copy of BACCI's letter is attached to this report.

The former fire station building comprises an item of environmental heritage for the purpose of Council's local planning instrument. It would be preferable to acknowledge, retain and promote the building's heritage values in any proposal to adapt the property for alternative use.

Legal / Resource / Financial Implications

Council has not allocated funds under its current Delivery Program for the purpose of designing alternative uses for the subject property, or to carry out any work to change the current building or otherwise redevelop the site.

If the Council is able to provide a reasonably clear indication of its preference in terms of the future use of the property (ie commercial or community based usage) it may be possible to engage resources to undertake design work. A budget will need to be identified for this.

Consultation

Community engagement in regard to alternative usage for the property would be considered once the Council has identified its general preference, as referred to above.

Options

The options available to the Council in regard to 60 Crane Street appear to be as follows:

1. The General Manager arrange for expressions of interest to be called for the commercial leasing of the property (as a whole, or in separate parts) on an "as is" basis. Prospective tenants would have the responsibility for securing necessary approvals for their intended use of the property and to meet the cost of any work proposed to be undertaken. The attraction of this option is that it provides Council with the opportunity to receive and accumulate rental income. This provides time in which the Council can determine the most appropriate long term use of the property;

4.2 Ballina Fire Station (Former) Property - Future

2. Council could redevelop the property itself, as a commercial enterprise. This might involve refurbishing the former fire station building and removing some or all of the secondary buildings, or completely redeveloping the site by removing all buildings (all subject to development consent);
3. Council could indicate that its preference is to utilize the former fire station building as a community facility. Principally, the building would be converted so as to operate as an extension of the Northern Rivers Community Gallery to achieve cultural and/or artistic outcomes, possibly along the lines of what has been described in the notes accompanying this report. This option would require the engagement of a person or firm with requisite professional skills and experience in this field, to scope out options for the property and determine how it would best “fit” with other adjacent properties. This process would include further discussion within the Council, as well as key stakeholder and community engagement. Any outcomes from this process, endorsed by the Council, would in turn require development consent.

On balance, Option 3 is the preferred option. It is suggested the shire community and many of our visitors have an appetite for improved social infrastructure as a means of reinforcing and nurturing our cultural identity and sense of place. That said, it is also recognised that projects of this kind consume a great deal of money and other resources to plan and implement. Once operational, these facilities continue to cost significant amounts of rate payers' dollars.

It is conceivable that external grant funding could be available to assist in the planning /design of such a community-based facility, though the likelihood of success and timelines are uncertain. It is also acknowledged that the Council is already, or will soon be seeking very significant external funds for other major capital infrastructure projects which are “on the books”, so to speak, and which are going to consume considerable financial and other resources. These projects include a proposed indoor sporting and recreational facility, extension of pathway projects, major airport upgradings (including road connections) and a new surf club in Lennox Head.

The recommendation which follows invites the Council to consider allocating a budget in its forthcoming 2016/17 Draft Operational Plan for the engagement of a person/firm with requisite professional skills and experience to prepare design options for the adaptive reuse of the former fire station site to facilitate its use as a cultural and/or artistic space.

The only concern with this is that with all our other current priority projects it may be preferable to commercially lease this building for a few years while we finish the other projects. If this was the preferred option an alternative recommendation could be:

That Council seeks commercial tenancies for the occupation of the Ballina Fire Station for an indicative maximum period of five years. At the end, or close to the end of this five period, Council re-assess the long term options for this building.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Council notes the contents of this report which discusses future options for the adaptive reuse of the former Ballina Fire Station.
2. That Council confirms its preference for the future use of the property is principally a cultural and/or artistic space aligned with the Northern Rivers Community Gallery. Further, that the principal building on the site, being the former fire station, is not compromised in terms of its general appearance and fabric under adaptive reuse proposals.
3. That Council consider an allocation of funds in its 2016/17 Draft Operational Plan for the engagement of professional services to investigate options for the adaptive reuse of the property as per point two above.

Attachment(s)

1. Excerpt from Ballina Local Environmental Plan 2012
2. Aerial photograph of adjacent allotments to Ballina Fire Station
3. Letter from BACCI, dated September 2015.
4. Preliminary views about the adaptive reuse of the former Ballina Fire Station

EXCERPT FROM BALLINA LEP 2012

Zone B3 Commercial Core

1 Objectives of zone

- To provide a wide range of retail, business, office, entertainment, community and other suitable land uses that serve the needs of the local and wider community.
- To encourage appropriate employment opportunities in accessible locations.
- To maximise public transport patronage and encourage walking and cycling.
- To maintain a distinct retail hierarchy as identified in Council's strategic planning framework.
- To enable residential and tourist development that is compatible with the commercial nature of activities in the zone.
- To ensure a safe and accessible built environment.
- To encourage development that recognises natural, cultural and built heritage.
- To encourage development that achieves the efficient use of resources such as energy and water.

2 Permitted without consent

Environmental protection works; Home-based child care; Home occupations

3 Permitted with consent

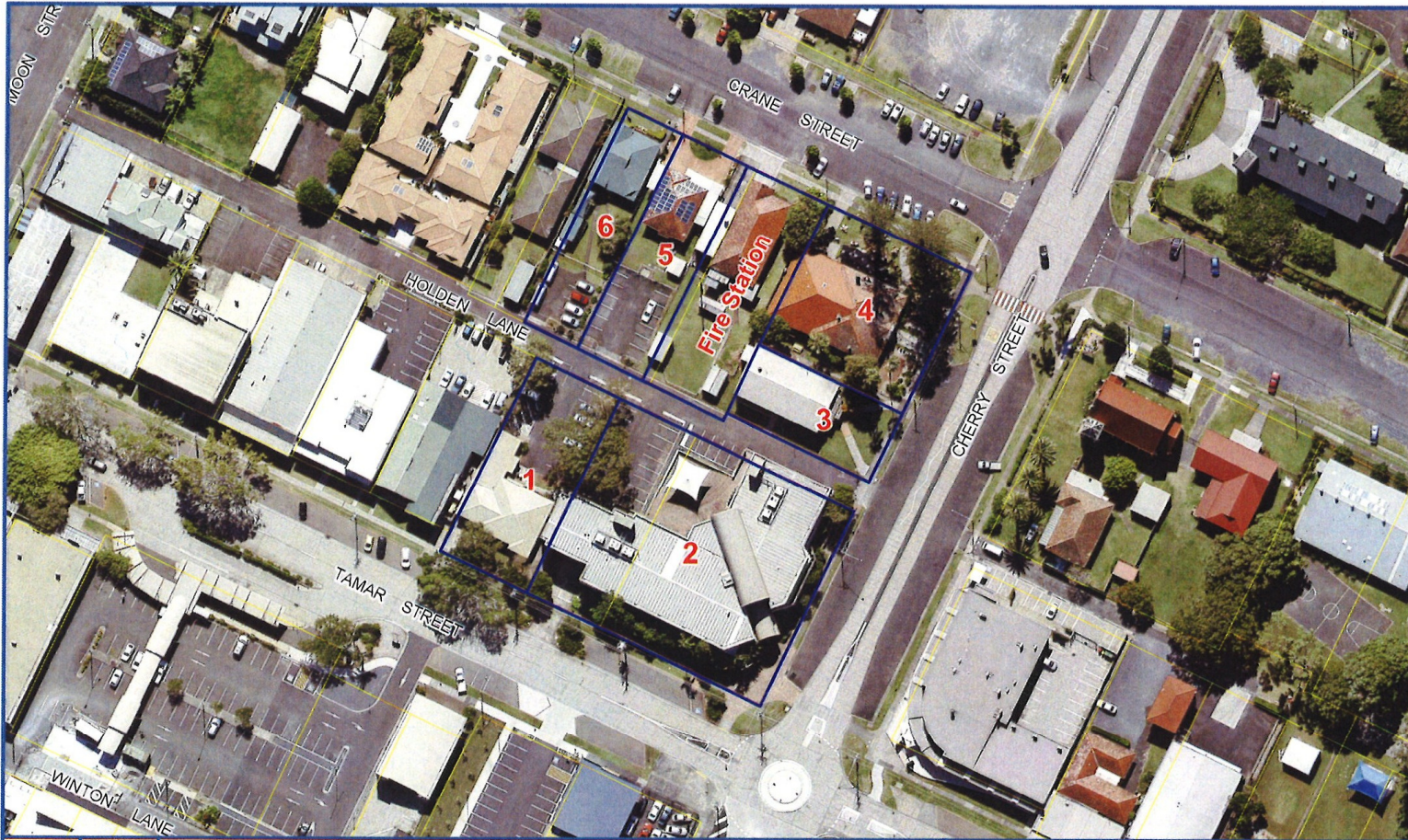
Child care centres; Commercial premises; Community facilities; Educational establishments; Entertainment facilities; Function centres; Hotel or motel accommodation; Information and education facilities; Medical centres; Passenger transport facilities; Recreation facilities (indoor); Registered clubs; Respite day care centres; Restricted premises; Roads; Shop top housing; Any other development not specified in item 2 or 4

4 Prohibited

Agriculture; Air transport facilities; Airstrips; Animal boarding or training establishments; Boat building and repair facilities; Camping grounds; Caravan parks; Cemeteries; Correctional centres; Crematoria; Depots; Eco-tourist facilities; Exhibition villages; Extractive industries; Farm buildings; Forestry; Heavy industrial storage establishments; Highway service centres; Industrial retail outlets; Industrial training facilities; Industries; Mooring pens; Moorings; Open cut mining; Residential accommodation; Rural industries; Sex services premises; Storage premises; Vehicle body repair workshops; Warehouse or distribution centres; Waste or resource management facilities

Zone B4 Mixed Use

4.2 Ballina Fire Station (Former) Property - Future



		Ballina Fire Station	
<small>DISCLAIMER © Land & Property Information 2016 Although all care is taken in the preparation of this plan, Ballina Shire Council accepts no responsibility for any misprints, errors, omissions or inaccuracies. The information contained within this plan is for pictorial representation only. Do not scale. Accurate measurements should be undertaken by survey.</small>		<small>Printed 03/02/2016</small>	

4.2 Ballina Fire Station (Former) Property - Future

B.A.C.C.I
P.O. Box 111
Ballina 2478
September 2015



The Mayor,
Ballina Shire Council
P.O. Box 450
Ballina 2478

We, the members of Ballina Arts and Crafts Inc. wish to express a strong interest in Ballina Shire Council establishing an extension to the current Northern Rivers Community Gallery in Cherry St. There is a pressing need in Ballina for a workshop and lockup facility of industrial standard, for use by community members wishing to further their skills in the arts and crafts.

BACCI was instrumental in providing and sourcing the funds needed to create an art gallery in Ballina. Upon completion of this facility, the council elected to allocate the work space in the rear of the building to the Gallery Café function.

To date, it has proven to be beyond the means of individuals in the community to provide workshop and lockup storage which is large or industrially robust enough for use by groups practising in the arts and crafts. The outdoor area between the gallery and the fire station could also be put to good use and be used for outdoor art activities.

We note that a new fire station is being constructed and believe that the previous fire station behind the gallery could be suitable as a workshop/education centre with lock up storage spaces for arts and craft groups.

We notice too, that what we are proposing correlates positively with the aims and objectives as stated in the literature of the Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy. Groups such as BACCI are well positioned to make valuable contributions to being creative, innovative and keeping Ballina beautiful, supporting a sense of community, bringing more life to the CBD, supporting residents of all ages to lead healthy, creative lives and honouring Ballina's history and heritage.

We therefore urge council to seriously consider establishing a sturdy, industrial standard indoor and outdoor workshop area with lockup spaces for equipment needed by the art and craft groups in this shire. We believe the fire station building behind the gallery to be an excellent central location for the facility we are proposing, and we look forward to discussing this matter with you at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Diane M J Bell

Diane M J Bell B.A. Dip. Ed (President)
On behalf of the members of B.A.C.C.I

4.2 Ballina Fire Station (Former) Property - Future

Preliminary Views About the Adaptive Reuse of the Former Ballina Fire Station

1. Comments by Council's Manager, Community Facilities and Customer Service.

Mixed Use – Shared Commercial and Community Arts Facility.

The vision for this concept is to create an energetic and popular central arts and cultural hub within the Ballina CBD that pushes the boundaries of the traditional 'art gallery' model to generate a dynamic social and entertainment space for residents and visitors alike.

The primary purpose of the arts precinct is to expand and support the existing operations of the Northern Rivers Community Gallery (NRCG) whilst also providing a range of arts based commercial and entertainment spaces that complement and enhance the services offered by the gallery.

This concept envisages the incremental establishment of a cultural and artistic precinct inclusive of and immediately adjacent to the existing Gallery, using the Fire Station as the first stage. In the longer term, this may also include the adjoining former Ballina Municipal Library site, by either adapting the existing building or substantially redeveloping the land (subject to dealing with the Crown in terms of land tenure etc).

Stage one, adaption of the Ballina Fire Station property, would comprise of:

- Increased NRCG exhibition space
- Artist workshop spaces for hire/lease
- Small and/or boutique arts based retail spaces
- Wine and tapas bar
- Two live event spaces

The above elements would be linked to, and enhance, the NRCG through the provision of a new adjoining feature, such as an expanded dining deck or improved landscaping, between the existing Gallery/Café and the Fire Station building. This would have the effect of integrating the two buildings and activate what is currently a "dead" space into an exciting thoroughfare between Crane Street and Holden Lane, creating a miniature town square with food, retail, exhibition and live events providing a hive of activity. Ideally, a new opening would be created at the rear (western end) of the existing Gallery to connect it with the new exhibition spaces in the Fire Station on the other side of this public space.

During the day the Gallery operations and Gallery Café would continue to deliver high quality services, enhanced by increased exhibition space, the "micro" retail outlets and artist workshops; while in the evening live music and events, complemented by the wine and tapas bar, would provide a relaxing and vibrant alfresco arts and dining experience.

The micro retail spaces could be occupied by artisans, or other creative retailers, who would complement the Gallery's operations and drive increased patronage to Gallery exhibitions. Tenure for these spaces could be limited to short durations to encourage turnover/rotation and provide exposure for a greater number of emerging businesses. Ideally artisans, such as jewellers, would produce the products sold on site to create additional interest for visitors and customers.

The establishment of the two small scale event or performance spaces would provide Ballina with quality small scale entertainment options for alternative, experimental or emerging artists. The first of these spaces might be in the Engine Room of the Fire Station building and the second would be an outdoor space in the rear yard area; catering for family friendly live music and outdoor cinema experiences. The outdoor area would link in with the existing gardens between the NRCG and former Ballina Municipal Library building and could also be styled to incorporate beautiful landscaping, gardens and public art as attractors to enliven the space.

4.2 Ballina Fire Station (Former) Property - Future

In time the former Ballina Municipal Library building could be modified or redeveloped to create more artist workshop spaces if demand requires; or alternatively more retail, dining or performance spaces as well.

This concept would benefit and reinforce the significance of the Ballina central business and commercial area. Whilst the properties at 62 and 64 Crane Street could also be considered for inclusion in the new precinct, it is noted these are presently not zoned for commercial type usage under the Council's planning instrument.

Practical issues to address would include the existing vehicle delivery area servicing the Café and the Gallery and building across the boundary of two properties in separate ownership (fire rating/protection issues). Care would also need to be taken to ensure the heritage values of the two buildings were not compromised, and car parking may need to be addressed.

Enquiries by Council staff indicate that relatively small scale arts and culture-based precincts of the kind envisaged are successful in both metropolitan and regional centres around Australia. The implementation of a concept of this kind, as outlined above, would help to reinforce and support the commitment the Council has previously made in terms of the operation of the Northern Rivers Community Gallery and many of the key objectives outlined in Ballina Shire Council's Community Strategic Plan (CSP) and Cultural Plan, outlined at the end of this document.

2. Comments by Council's Gallery Coordinator.

Extension of the Northern Rivers Community Gallery

In recent years the NRCG has continued to develop its annual program in line with Council's Cultural and Community Strategic Plans. The current program is successfully growing the number of visitors and participants to the Gallery through diversifying the range of exhibitions and providing additional opportunities for the community to engage with the artists through a range of public programs. Whilst community feedback for Gallery programs to date is positive, major constraints for the continued growth of the NRCG are the physical limitations and after hours accessibility of the Gallery building.

The Fire Station provides an exceptional opportunity to expand the existing services and facilities of the NRCG due to its location on the adjacent property and the similar architectural style of the fire station building. The building could comfortably house and provide two discrete venues and four activities / uses that would engage and provide for different demographics of the local community in addition to providing much needed storage facilities for the NRCG. The proposed uses are:

- a) Five to six leased artist workshop spaces
- b) An art education space
- c) Accessible art project space
- d) Gallery storage (artwork and equipment).

The engine room would be utilised as both the art education space and as an accessible art project space.

These activities and uses are discussed in greater detail further in this report.

This option proposes a 'Community Art Centre' type of business model which has been adopted by various community focussed arts facilities, local and international, particularly outside of city centres. This 'survive and thrive' arts sector sustainability model is based on the key objectives of engagement and sustainability through the diversification of arts and culture experience, support and sustain arts and cultural workers whilst establishing an economic income stream to support the

4.2 Ballina Fire Station (Former) Property - Future

business. This option also acknowledges the large number anecdotal evidence NRCG staff receives from the community for:

- Extended arts education programs in both artistically and duration (i.e. weekly sessions over a 6 to 8 week period)
- A need for supported artist workshop spaces (leased 6 to 12month periods)
- Multi-disciplinary accessible art project space (for short-term use outside of annual exhibition program)

A recent unsolicited letter from the Ballina Arts and Crafts Inc. BACCI confirms the community support for the NRCG option being proposed for the future use of the Fire Station. This is provided as Attachment 1 to the report.

The building would require minimal structural change to instigate these activities, on par with the requirements needed to set up for commercial leasing, with disability access being an example of a modification needed. After a two-year period, if the use had been deemed successful, revenue raised from the various activities could then be spent on purpose built features for the space. Proposed future modifications could include:

- Sound-proofing the accessible art project space to be utilised for music or performance rehearsals
- Moveable walls (also for the art project space) allowing flexibility for multiple uses
- Installation of three phase power for ceramic or other craft based production equipment and climate controlled artwork storage facilities
- Extension of an outdoor workshop area

These future modifications will require further examination and budgetary considerations.

It is also proposed that the permissible uses under Council's planning instrument be reviewed at this time in consideration of establishing an artist-in-residence program open to local, national and international visiting artists.

In line with Council's Cultural Plan 'to activate the Northern Rivers Community Gallery (NRCG) as a central hub for creative activity in the Shire and the region', this option provides opportunity to expand NRCG's core business to deliver community-engaged arts programs working with local, regional and international communities; foster and promote a sustainable and accessible local creative industry; secure revenue to both off-set operational costs that also goes back to supporting meaningful, community engaged arts programs.

The benefits for this 'Community Art Centre' option are cultural, social and economic. The combination of increased Gallery space, a multi-disciplinary accessible art project space, leased artist workshop spaces for local artists, dedicated education space and storage space for NRCG event furniture and a potential artwork collection will do more than just further develop the local arts community.

It will also increase opportunities for community participation and support growth in the local creative industries leading to potential wider economic growth in line with our community strategic and cultural plans.

Regional gallery status would also be more achievable with an upgrade of Gallery storage facilities to accommodate storage of artworks to national museum and gallery industry standards. The leasing of 60 to 70% of the floor space to artists for a shared studio space, the hire of the accessible arts project space combined with a dedicated art workshop education space (separate to the main Gallery) provides significant revenue opportunity comparable to the commercial leasing revenue but with strong, long-term cultural and community benefits.

It is the opinion of NRCG staff that the Community Arts Centre model meets the industry standard, fills a community need and is also best practice for sustainability and viability of a cultural facility. Following are web links of other facilities that provide examples of successful, thriving cultural hubs

4.2 Ballina Fire Station (Former) Property - Future

incorporating exhibition space, public programs, artist workshop spaces and/or multi-disciplinary arts project spaces.

Footscray Community Arts Centre - Footscray	http://footscrayarts.com/about-us/
Newcastle Community Arts Centre - Newcastle	http://ncac.org.au/
Fire Station Arts Centre – Dubbo	https://www.facebook.com/firestationartscentre?ref=bookmarks
Gasworks Art Park	http://www.gasworks.org.au/

Web links to shared Artist Run Initiative artist workshop spaces

Lismore Art Space (LAS)	http://lismoreartspace.net.au/
Hammer and Hand - Metal & Jewellery Collective (Byron Bay)	http://www.hammerandhand.com.au/
Coop Art Studios (Gold Coast/Tweed)	https://www.facebook.com/coopartstudios/info/?tab=page_info

i) Artist workshop spaces

Currently in the Ballina Shire, there are few, if any affordable workshop spaces for artists and craftspeople to rent. A workspace is essential to enable and foster a commitment to sustainable arts practices and provide stability for an artist. The lack of affordable workshop space has seen local creative industry people relocate their studio practice out of the Ballina Shire.

Artists/craftspeople include but are not limited to people who are painters, photographers, sculptors, printmakers, ceramicists, wood-turners, jewellers and glass artists. An artist workshop space requires very basic things such as ventilation, access, toilets, water, power and security. For a workshop space to be viable and beneficial for an artist, it needs to be available for a substantial period of time. The logistics of moving in things such as easels, tools, desks and materials means it is a long-term investment for the artist. Generally, studio lease agreements are for between 6 to 12 months.

Examples of studio spaces include the following, some of which offer short term per hour rates, a model which could apply to the Engine Room/Art Workshop Space.

- Parramatta City Council - Parramatta Artists Studios (studio \$80 p/week)
- M16 Artspace ACT- 27 artist studios / 4 arts organisations that offer art classes (studios \$50-\$120 p/week)
- Brand X – Supported by NSW Govt., Art NSW, Marrickville Council – (desk \$40 p/week)
- Newcastle City Council – Newcastle Community Arts Centre (studios \$50-\$250 p/week)
- Rabbit + Cocoon Gold Coast – (studio hire \$20-\$50 p/hr community/business)
- Frankston City Council – Frankston Arts Centre Cube 37 (studio hire \$20-\$50 p/hr)

A conservative figure of revenue raised from the lease of the artist workshop spaces would be \$18,720, based on a pricing structure of between \$40-\$80 per week for each space (5-6 spaces). As part of the lease agreement, the artist would have an obligation to create and deliver a community focussed arts workshop once every six months. This would provide ten free workshops and opportunities for community engagement and professional development within the annual gallery program with minimal resourcing implications to the Gallery operations.

4.2 Ballina Fire Station (Former) Property - Future

The artist workshop spaces also creates the opportunity to develop an artist-in-residence program. Many councils including Hazelhurst Regional Arts Centre, Sutherland Shire Council, Ashfield City Council and Tweed Shire Council have established such programs with the benefits being far reaching. An artist in residence is an artist who travels to a destination or workspace to immerse themselves in a new and unique environment. The idea is that this process will develop new ideas, networks and work practices that will enrich their practice and that of the host community. The residence program allows artists to work and share their experiences with the community through scheduled talks and master classes and provides visitors with the opportunity to meet artists and observe and learn from their creative process. Council's planning instrument may need to be reviewed to accommodate an artist-in-residence space within the Fire Station premises.

ii) Art education space

The 'Engine Room', a dedicated education space, allows for multi-disciplinary arts workshops that could run for extended lengths of time i.e. a full term of 6 to 8 weeks, fosters education, appreciation and engagement of the arts locally. Key demographics that can be provided for include: Bubs and Mums, Preschool Art, Primary School, Young Adults, Adults and Older People.

Currently, the NRCG is restricted for running artistically diverse or ongoing art workshops as the only space available is located in the main Gallery itself. Some restrictions include:

- certain artmaking techniques are too messy or noisy for hosting in an exhibition environment,
- potential risk to Gallery space and artworks on exhibition,
- time restrictive, disruptive for Gallery patrons and workshop participants,
- security and access is restrictive requiring a staff member to be present for security reasons (pending Gallery opening hours and staff availability).

Currently, most adult workshops on offer in the Shire take place from artist's studios in remote locations. For example, local artist Maria Heaton was running popular workshops in Ballina from subsidised commercial premises, until the rent was increased and forced her to relocate. Subsequently, she runs workshops from her home in Pimlico with drastically reduced attendance.

Until recently, there were two artists providing workshops for children in the Ballina Shire. One was located in Alstonville; this has closed due to the tutor's ill health and the other was located in Ballina, which has now relocated outside of the Ballina Shire due to costly rent.

A dedicated education space would enable initiatives such as a free children's drop in workshop. Many art galleries provide this service as an activity for families and a way to get new audiences into the gallery environment. Such a program would cost around \$10,000 and could be funded by a grant such as Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation (funding community activities). As an example, the program could run each Saturday 10am-12pm for 4-12 year olds and be facilitated by trained volunteers.

A workshop space requires simple infrastructure; things such as trestle tables, chairs, storage, drying rack and wash-basin. An ongoing education program would provide an additional revenue stream for NRCG, with revenue raised potentially going back into the public programs budgets.

For example, a children's art class: 1.5 hr class x 8 weeks (\$320 term fee) x 12 students = \$3,840 less the tutor's fee of \$800 creates a profit of \$3,000 for a single class.

Additionally, local artists and artisans could hire the space for one-day workshops for art techniques such as fabric dyeing, jewellery making and painting. We can offer the attractive package of a space, promotion (to Gallery mailing list), Café and Gallery with minimal impact on existing Gallery resourcing.

iii) Accessible art project space

The workshop space could also double as multi-disciplinary accessible arts project space available for hire for individuals or other community groups. This art space could host community initiated short term (1 day – 1 week) arts events such as; student or youth group exhibitions and performance; community fundraiser art events; artist initiated exhibitions that are more challenging in content, ideas, and forms not suited to the main Gallery space.

The 'Engine Room' Art Project Space would provide a more flexible, affordable, accessible, multi-disciplinary space for the whole community to access at short notice outside of the normal 4 week, annual Gallery program.

The Gallery would also utilise the 'Engine Room' Art Project Space to extend its exhibition or public program capacity.

iv) Gallery storage facilities

The Fire Station building would provide NRCG with increased storage space that is in line with WHS practice, a feature that is currently challenging. This storage space would also assist in streamlining work practices that could improve on exhibition changeovers.

The ground floor of the large shed to the side of the main building of the Fire Station would provide ample storage now and in to the future for existing gallery furniture and equipment (plinths, tiered shop display cupboards, special event seating, safekeeping of heritage doors, windows and drapes that are not in use in the Gallery) and can be used for this purpose without any modifications needed.

Access to all or part of this building is highly desirable to redress the current storage deficit for the Gallery. It is possible that other Council operations might benefit from a shared arrangement within the large shed, and this could be assessed by the General Manager on an "as needed" basis.

Depending on the future direction of Council's Gallery, other dedicated storage needs may emerge. For example, the Council may wish to support the idea of a Gallery art collection, through acquisitions and/or donations. This is a specialist area and would require purpose-built infrastructure which could be accommodated as a partial or full redevelopment of the Fire Station property.

Community Strategic Plan

The Gallery option proposed by NRCG responds to the following key objectives outlined in Ballina Shire Council's Community Strategic Plan (CSP) and Cultural Plan 'Our Community: Our Culture':

Connected Community

- CC2.1 Encourage community interaction and volunteering
- CC2.2 Create events, strategies and activities that promote interaction and education, as well as a sense of place
- CC3.1 Provide equitable access to a range of community services and facilities
- CC3.2 Provide young people with a range of leisure activities along with opportunities for personal development

Prosperous Economy

- PE1.1 Promote our area as an attractive place to invest and visit
- PE2.1 Develop plans that encourage business growth and diversification
- PE2.2 Promote and facilitate a range of business activities
- PE3.2 Facilitate and provide affordable infrastructure, both business and residential

Engaged Leadership

- EL1.1 Facilitate and develop strong relationships and partnerships with the community
- EL2.1 Proactively pursue revenue opportunities, cost savings and/or efficiencies

Our Community: Our Culture

1. Continue to activate the Northern Rivers Community Gallery as a central hub for creative activity in the Shire and the region that complements exhibitions - including live music and other performance, education and professional development programs and family based cultural activity.
2. Explore flexible shared workspaces for artists and arts learning.
3. Promote the sustainability and accessibility of the Shire, and region's creative industries sector.

4.3 Alstonville and Ballina Swimming Pools Redevelopment - Update

4.3 Alstonville and Ballina Swimming Pools Redevelopment - Update

Delivery Program Community Facilities and Services

Objective To provide the Council with an update on the progress of the Alstonville and Ballina Swimming Pool redevelopment projects and to confirm a revised timeframe for the works.

Background

At the Council's Facilities Committee meeting held on 23 November 2015 the concept design proposals for the redevelopment of the Ballina and Alstonville swimming pools were endorsed and the General Manager was authorised to proceed to the next stage of the project, being the design and construct phase. The Minutes of that meeting were subsequently adopted at the following Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 26 November 2015, with one amendment, to extend the length of the enclosed 'learn to swim' pool to a minimum of 25 metres in both facilities.

This report provides the Council with a brief update on the current estimated timeframe for completion of stage two of this project.

Key Issues

- Closure of Council road adjacent to Alstonville Swimming Pool
- Planning approvals
- Procurement (design and construction of the pools)
- Timeline for completion

Information

Following the adoption of the November 2015 Facilities Committee Meeting Minutes, Community Facilities staff engaged a local planning consultancy to begin preparation of the planning applications for both the Alstonville and Ballina swimming pools. Our consultant met with Council's contracted swimming pools consultant, Martin Cooper (Ridgemill Pty Ltd) and Council's Manager Community Facilities and Customer Service in mid-January to inspect the facilities and review the scope of works for the planning applications.

A pre-lodgement meeting has also been held with Council's relevant technical/assessment staff and an estimated timeframe for completion of the project was established.

4.3 Alstonville and Ballina Swimming Pools Redevelopment - Update

Having regard for the key requirements to obtain relevant planning approvals, secure partial closure of a road (Alstonville project – this matter will be the subject of a separate report to the Council) and prepare and finalise tender documentation, it is envisaged Council will only be in position to award a successful tender/s by November this year. With this timeline, and allowing for refinements and supply of components, construction work may commence in March 2017, with both projects running concurrently. The pools would reopen for the commencement of the swimming season in September 2017.

Council's original Long Term Financial Plan, and our application for a special rate variation, was based on the Ballina swimming pool being redeveloped during May to September this year and Alstonville during the same period in 2017.

This revised timeframe will not impact on our special rate variation however it will be important to communicate this change to all the key stakeholders and the broader community.

Legal / Resource / Financial Implications

Funding for redevelopment of the Alstonville and Ballina swimming pools and all associated consultancy costs has previously been approved and allocated by the Council.

Consultation

Extensive community consultation was undertaken in order to determine the approved concept designs for the two swimming pool complexes. Further consultation may be required as a component of the planning approvals process. Should this be the case, the Council will be notified of the results.

Options

There are limited options in respect to the proposed timeframe due to the planning approval process and the recommendation that follows confirms this revised timeframe.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Council confirms that based on the planning approval process that the redevelopment of the Alstonville and Ballina swimming pools will occur concurrently during the 2017 off season.
2. That the General Manager ensure that this change to the originally envisaged redevelopment timeframe (i.e. Ballina during the 2016 off season) is communicated to the key stakeholders and the broader community through direct correspondence and Council publications such as Community Connect.

Attachment(s)

Nil