

HERBERT RIVER IMPROVEMENT TRUST

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

FRIDAY 3RD APRIL, 2009
AT 9.00 A.M.



A. ATTENDANCE –

Present were Mr. W.H. Pickering (Chairperson), Cr. P. Lynch (Member), Cr. G.P. Gianotti (Member), Mr. I. Baker (Invitee – DNR & W, Ingham Office), Mr. E. Colman (Invitee – DNR & W, Innisfail Office), Mr. B.E. Leach (Trust Engineer), Mr. R.W. Clark (Trust Secretary), Mr. S. Hall (Trust Works Manager) and Mr. T. Fenoglio (Trust Special Projects Officer)

B. PURPOSE –

To consider the Report on assessment of riverbank damage from the February, 2009 Cyclone Ellie / Monsoonal Event.

C. GENERAL BUSINESS –

1. *Summary of Estimate of Costs*

The Trust Engineer, Mr. Bruce Leach tabled the following documents:-

- a) Summary of Estimate of Cost Restoration of Public Assets – Damage to Trust Riverbank Assets – Total Estimated Cost = \$1.6M;
- b) Summary of Estimate of Cost to Repair New Riverbank Damage – Total Estimated Cost = \$4M.

2. *Riverbank Asset Damage and New Works*

The Trust Special Projects Officer, Mr. Terry Fenoglio presented a powerpoint presentation showing a number of the locations including locality maps and photographs in relation to both riverbank asset damage and new works.

The Meeting was advised that although the Trust was still receiving advice of riverbank damage, it is believed that these documents reflect the majority of the damaged areas and new additions will be minor.

It was noted that the restoration works contain a mix of rock protection work, and also a significant amount of vegetation tree planting work.

Department of Natural Resources & Water representative, Mr. Errol Colman offered various comments and discussions resulted in the following points being identified:-

- The extent of new work damage is well beyond the resources of the Trust and the Trust should request the State Government for exceptional funding to address the repairs to new work over the next 2 to 3 years, instead of a much longer timeframe if no extra State Government funding is made available.
- The River Trust should be prepared to fund a small percentage of the work. However the Trust should highlight that its current precept is quite significant compared to other Trusts and the Trust's share of costs would most likely have to come from loan borrowings.
- In view of a significant vegetation element in the repair work, the Trust should highlight the employment benefits in carrying out this work and also associate such work with building resilience against climate change.
- The Trust needs to engage the support of the Local Member for Hinchinbrook.
- Where possible, the submission should highlight the need for such works to protect public infrastructure and particularly highlight the environmental impact, especially on water quality if these areas are not repaired and continue to erode and contribute to sediment run-off into the Great Barrier Marine Park Lagoon.
- Sort and classify the damaged locations according to each element e.g. environment and employment benefits rather than names of property holders.
- Highlight any opportunity for local employment creation e.g. proposed Mungalla Tree Planting Unit.
- Ensure that the submission has a "special" name for the project.
- Ensure that the scale of the problem is clearly highlighted in the submission to the State Government Minister for Resources, Mines & Energy, The Hon. Stephen Robertson.
- Opportunity exists to promote that it will take 2 to 3 years to carry out all of the repair work and that it is vital that the Trust be the responsible authority and not the Council as recommended by the Weller Report.
- In view of the significant water height at Halifax (in excess of the 100 year event) and despite it only being a less than 1 in 20 year event in Ingham strongly supports the need to model the impact of continued levee bank building upstream from Halifax in the Lower Herbert area and the consequent affect of keeping water in the riverbank which would otherwise have flowed across the flood plain. The Trust should incorporate within the special assistance request an amount of up to \$150,000 to carry out this modelling and use the results thereof to take appropriate action to mitigate continued future flow increases at Halifax.

3. Urgent Restoration Work – Damage to Trust Assets

The Trust Engineer, Mr. Bruce Leach advised that the Trust will need to prioritise urgent works and recognise that these works must first be approved by the Department of Natural Resources & Water (Mr. Errol Colman). Also that the Trust should issue a press release advising the public of its proposed plan of action including clarification of the difference between Trust work that is NDRRA funded, and the new work which will require special Government assistance.

Individual landholders will also be advised of the Trust's action; however it is important that enquiries be channelled to either the Trust Chairman or the Trust Engineer.

Resolved – That the Trust Engineer be authorised to assess and prioritise the NDRRA funded restoration work on existing Trust assets.
(Cr. Gianotti and Lynch – Carried)

4. ***Lower Herbert Water Management Authority***

The Trust noted that the Authority is carrying out its own assessment of damage to Authority assets. The Trust will not be involved in their assessment or in any submission which they will advance in their own right to the Department / State Government.

- D. **INSPECTIONS** – The meeting adjourned at 1.00 p.m. for lunch and resumed at 2.00 p.m. with the Trust carrying out inspections at a number of sites representative of the damage.
- E. **CONCLUSION** – The meeting concluded at 4.30 p.m.

(Sgd) Mr. W.H. Pickering,
TRUST CHAIRPERSON.