

Shoalhaven City Mayor's Relief Fund

Meeting Date: Tuesday, 05 February, 2019
Location: Jervis Bay Rooms, City Administrative Centre, Bridge Road, Nowra
Time: 4.00pm

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Agenda

1. **Apologies**
2. **Confirmation of Minutes**
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3. **Declarations of Interest**
4. **Reports**
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5. **General Business**

Membership

Clr Findley – Chairperson
All Councillors
Mr Russ Pigg or nominee
Mr Stephen Dunshea
Mr Mark Williams
Mr Glenn Wran
Mr James Halliday

Quorum – Three (3)

Purpose

- The fund has been established and maintained as a public fund for the relief of persons in Australia who are in necessitous circumstances and it is intended that the public be invited to contribute to the fund.
- A person will be in necessitous circumstances where his or her financial resources are insufficient to obtain all that is necessary, not only for a bare existence, but for a modest standard of living in the Australian community.
- Necessitous circumstances may result from a disaster caused by flood, fire, drought, tempest or other calamity.

Delegated Authority

The management of the fund is vested in the Shoalhaven City Mayor's Relief Fund Committee. Rules have been adopted by Council.

MINUTES OF THE SHOALHAVEN CITY MAYOR'S RELIEF FUND

Meeting Date: Thursday, 2 August 2018

Location: Jervis Bay Rooms, City Administrative Centre, Bridge Road, Nowra

Time: 4.04pm

The following members were present:

Clr Levett – Acting Chair

Clr Cheyne – arrived at 4.10pm

Glenn Wran – SES

Mark Williams - RFS

Stephen Dunshea – Director, Finance Corporate & Community Services

Also present:

Vanessa Phelan – Finance Manager

Apologies / Leave of Absence

Clr Findley, Clr Gartner, Clr Cheyne (arrived after meeting closed), Russ Pigg.

In the absence of the Chairperson, the meeting nominated Clr Levett as Acting Chair.

Confirmation of the Minutes

RESOLVED (Clr Levett / By consent)

That the Minutes of the Shoalhaven City Mayor's Relief Fund held on Monday 26 March 2018 be confirmed.

CARRIED

Declarations of Interest

Nil

REPORTS

MR18.2 Mayor's Relief Fund Financial Statements 30th June 2018

**HPERM Ref:
D18/250431**

Vanessa Phelan introduced the Financial Statements. She stated that Council had not received donations and there had been no appeal to raise additional funds during the year. Interest was received on investments. A \$5000 donation had been made to Bega Council for the Tathra bushfires, and there was continuing expenditure from last year for Safe Shelter Shoalhaven to complete the project. The net result is therefore negative. Cash in the fund has consequently been reduced to \$75,240.40.

Mark Williams (Shoalhaven City Fire Control Officer) asked whether the fund is increased annually by a set proportion. Vanessa Phelan clarified that it is a determined investment that earns interest, with funds raised by appeals to the community.

Recommendation (Item to be determined under delegated authority)

That the Financial Statements to 30 June 2018 for the Mayor's Relief Fund are received for information.

RESOLVED (Stephen Dunshea / Glenn Wran)

That the Financial Statements to 30 June 2018 for the Mayor's Relief Fund are received for information.

CARRIED

There being no further business, the meeting concluded, the time being 4.10.

Clr Levett
CHAIRPERSON

MR19.1 Support for Local Farmers

HPERM Ref: D18/309714

Group: Finance Corporate & Community Services Group
Section: Human Resources, Governance & Customer Service

Purpose / Summary

To advise the Shoalhaven City Mayor's Relief Fund Committee of Council's resolution (MIN18.643) to donate funds to farmers affected by the drought, and to seek its recommendation on the manner of distribution.

Recommendation (Item to be determined under delegated authority)

That:

1. The Shoalhaven City Mayor's Relief Fund Committee determine the manner in which drought funds of \$10,475.90 will be distributed.
2. The Shoalhaven Drought Assistance Fund be closed to future contributions at this time.

Options

1. That the Committee provide the funding to one of the Charitable Organisations as outlined in the report for distribution.

Implications: The funds will not be guaranteed to be distributed to farmers in the Shoalhaven as required by the Council resolution.

2. That the Committee seek out a local community organisation, such as a Lions or Rotary Group to distribute the funding.

Implications: A suitable organisation has not yet been identified. The funds will not be distributed to a registered charity as required by the Council resolution.

3. That the Committee distribute the funds to farming property owners by way of a one-off rate discount.

Implications: The funds would not be distributed in accordance with the Council resolution. This method would provide the funding to all local farmers within the Local Government Area.

4. That the Committee distribute the funds via an application process.

Implications: The funds would not be distributed in accordance with the Council resolution. This option has the greatest administrative burden to the Council; however, it is considered the best method to distribute the funds to local farmers in need. A panel would need to be established to manage the application process.

5. The funds be held in abeyance at this time.

Implications: The funds will not be used until a further resolution is passed as to their use.

Background

At the Ordinary Meeting of 28 August 2018, agenda item CL18.192 – Notice of Motion – Support for Local Farmers raised the hardship being experienced by local farmers due to the drought. It was resolved (MIN18.643):

That Council:

- 1. Recommends the Mayor's Relief Fund committee forwards \$10,000 to the most suitable charitable organisation to distribute the funds to our local farmers in need.*
- 2. Request the Mayor and the General Manager to activate the Mayors Relief Fund for a local appeal to support the local farmers in difficult situations.*

The Mayoral Relief Fund for local farmers was established and in the period to 31 December 2018 it raised \$475.90. With the addition of the \$10,000 funds specified by the Council resolution the total Drought Assistance Mayoral Relief funding totals \$10,475.90.

Research has been undertaken to identify an appropriate organisation that could be provided the funding in accordance with the Council resolution. An organisation that meets the requirements of the resolution (i.e. both being a charitable organisation and assuring distribution of the funds to Shoalhaven recipients only) has not been located.

This report seeks to provide a number of alternatives for the Committee to consider with respect to the distribution of the available funding.

Option 1: Distribution of funding can be undertaken through a registered charity

There are a number of charities which have drought funding programs in place. Details of each are outlined below; however, it should be noted that none of these charities are able to 'ringfence' the funding.

Enquiries have been made with a number of charities and the following programs/avenues for funding were identified.

a. [NSW Farmers Drought Relief Fund](#)

NSW Farmers has set up a drought relief appeal to collect donations for farmers in NSW affected by drought. It will make \$100 gift cards available through IGA stores to farmers affected by drought.

Funds will be used to purchase \$100 gift cards from IGA supermarkets. These cards will be provided to the Salvation Army for distribution through its rural chaplains to drought affected farmers in NSW. Farmers do not have to be a member of NSW Farmers to be able to receive a gift card.

The NSW Farmers Drought Relief Fund cannot guarantee that funds provided will be distributed in the Shoalhaven.

b. Salvation Army

The Salvation Army has established an Australian [Drought Relief Fund](#).

Donations to the fund are used in the following ways:

- \$ 500 – to assist a drought affected family with an overdue bill
- \$ 250 – to provide food, groceries and essential household items for a drought affected family
- \$ 100 – to help rural chaplains give one-on-one support to farmers

The Salvation Army cannot guarantee that funds provided will be distributed in the Shoalhaven or in NSW.

c. Red Cross

The Red Cross commenced a Disaster Relief and Recovery Appeal in August 2018 to collect and distribute funding.

The [website for the Red Cross](#) advises that the fund currently has \$11.5 million of funding to help drought affected farmers and farming communities. In NSW the applications are managed by the Country Women's Association (CWA).

Applications may be made by farmers, farming families or farming-dependent contractors in drought-affected areas of NSW, ACT, Queensland and South Australia as grants of up to \$3,000 through the CWA, and in Victoria through the Rural Financial Counselling Service (Gippsland). Red Cross appeal funds support these grants.

Grants can be used to meet household expenses, such as food, vehicle maintenance, school expenses, electricity, gas or rates, telephone expenses and dental or medical expenses.

The Red Cross/CWA cannot guarantee that funds provided will be distributed in the Shoalhaven.

The CWA advised Council to approach a local Lions Club or Rotary Club. Lions and Rotary are service organisations rather than registered charities for the distribution of the funds.

Option 2: A local community organisation

An approach has not been made to all Rotary and Lions Clubs given the requirement of the resolution to donate the funding to charitable organisations and those organisations are not registered as charitable organisations.

Cllr Wells, on behalf of Berry Rotary, approached Council in October 2018 to advise that the Rotary Club had appointed a Drought Relief Fund Committee to distribute \$16,000 of funding which it had raised. In January 2019 the Council was advised that the Rotary Committee had decommissioned its Committee as funds had been equally distributed to all four (4) farmers who made application.

The Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission is the national regulator of charities. A search of the database of registered charities returned 10 results with "Rotary" in the name. These were local Rotary Clubs and interstate foundations or associations. The Rotary Club of Berry is not a registered charity. A search of the database for Lions Clubs that were registered charities could not locate a local Lions Club that is also a registered charity.

Option 3: Distribution of funding via Rates

In the Shoalhaven there are 855 rateable properties to which the measure could apply, consisting of 130 dairy farmers and 725 ordinary farmland assessments.

The available funding of \$10,475.90 could be equally distributed to each farm property owner with the amount of discount being \$12.25.

Option 4: Distribution of funding via application

The Committee may consider given the information above, that the funds be made available via an application process. In order to do this the Committee (or a Working Party of the Committee) will need to establish a framework for the application process:

- Any criteria required to be met by applicant.

- Any cap to the funding available to each applicant, or method by which funding will be distributed to applicants.
- A panel (or other method) to determine the applications.

Option 5: Funds not be distributed at this time

If given the above information the Committee considers that the funding should not be distributed at this time, ideally identifying when the funding would be distributed.

As at January 2019 the Shoalhaven remains categorised as 'Drought Affected' by the NSW Department of Primary Industries.

Financial Implications

The Mayoral Relief Fund totals \$65,240.40.

In accordance with the resolution of 28 August 2018 \$10,000 of those funds are earmarked for Drought Assistance and together with \$475.90 collected by Shoalhaven Drought Assistance the total Drought Assistance Mayoral Relief funding totals \$10,475.90.