



# ORDINARY MEETING

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## Late Supplementary

Date of meeting: 28 May 2024  
Location: Council Chambers  
Time: 6:30 PM

**BUSINESS PAPER**



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**LATE SUPPLEMENTARY**

**10.5 INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES**

**10.5.3. IS - Lower Portland Ferry - Transfer to Transport for NSW - (95495)**

**Previous Item:** 15.4.1, Ordinary (28 May 2024)

**Directorate:** Infrastructure Services

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**PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

The purpose of this report is to consider the open (non-confidential) elements of the transfer of the Lower Portland Ferry (Council's asset) to Transport for NSW.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The business paper for the Council Meeting of 28 May 2024 includes a Confidential Report (Item 15.4.1) regarding the contractual and commercial arrangements in relation to the transfer of the Lower Portland Ferry (Council's asset) to Transport for NSW. This report provides the open (non-confidential) elements of Item 15.4.1. due to public interest.

Council when considering this report should only discuss the matters outlined in this report and should not discuss procurement, contractual or financial matters. These aspects of the report are to be discussed in Closed Confidential Session when considering Item 15.4.1.

Council has, for a number of years, advocated for the Lower Portland Ferry to be owned and operated by Transport for NSW, bringing its ownership and operation into line with the other three vehicular ferries operating on the Hawkesbury River.

Following this advocacy, Transport for NSW have agreed to accept ownership of the asset and its operation.

**RECOMMENDATION**

1. That Council receive and note the report on the transfer of the Lower Portland Ferry to Transport for NSW.
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**BACKGROUND**

The Lower Portland Ferry operates across the Hawkesbury River at Lower Portland, connecting West Portland Road with River Road. It is a critical link for the local community, being only one of two crossing points on the Hawkesbury within a reasonable distance (the other being Sackville Ferry). Previous community engagement has highlighted the importance of the Ferry for everyday access, as well as supporting the visitor economy.

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The Ferry is owned by Hawkesbury City Council, however its operations are jointly funded by Council and The Hills Shire Council. Since 2019, the NSW Government has substantively funded its operation by way of an annual contribution of \$500,000.

In total there are four vehicular ferries operating between Windsor and the Brooklyn Bridge: Sackville Ferry, Lower Portland Ferry, Webbs Creek Ferry and Wisemans Ferry. Of these four, it is only the Lower Portland Ferry which is owned and operated by a council, the remaining three are owned and operated by Transport for NSW (TfNSW).

Council has previously advocated for the Lower Portland Ferry to be brought into line with the other three ferries in respect to its ownership and operations. It was this advocacy which resulted in the financial assistance provided in 2019 (for a period of four years), and that advocacy has now resulted in TfNSW agreeing to accept the transfer of the Ferry.

#### **Relevant Legislation**

- Local Government Act 1993
- Roads Act 1993.

#### **DISCUSSION**

Council has, since at least 2019, advocated for the transfer of the Lower Portland Ferry to Transport for NSW (TfNSW). The basis of this advocacy has been twofold:

- Consistency and continuity of service; of the four vehicular ferries which operate on the Hawkesbury River, three (Sackville, Webbs Creek and Wisemans) are owned and operated by TfNSW; and
- Financial, operating and periodic capital costs of owning and operating the Lower Portland Ferry are borne by Hawkesbury City Council

While it is understood that there has been broad support for this position within Council, including the writing of letters seeking this outcome and the obtainment of four years' of funding from the NSW Government, it appears that Council has never formally adopted a position of transferring the Lower Portland Ferry to TfNSW.

The transfer would provide a much greater degree of service coordination across the four ferries, which is an important consideration in the management of periodic maintenance, vessel registration and the mandatory overhaul activities associated with registration. Flooding events too have demonstrated that there is benefit in a single authority being responsible for the management of ferries, providing a greater pool of resources, skilled and knowledgeable staff, to make certain decisions and undertake certain tasks during these events.

#### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The issues raised in this report concern matters which do not require community consultation under Council's Community Engagement Policy.

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**CONFORMANCE TO THE HAWKESBURY COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2042**

The proposal is consistent with the following Long-Term Community Objectives set out within the CSP.

Strong Economy

3.1 Creating an integrated and well-maintained transport system is an important local priority.

Reliable Council

4.1 Provide representative, responsive and accountable governance.

4.3 Build strong financial sustainability for now and future generations.

4.4 Build strong relationships and shared responsibilities.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT**

Financial Impacts are discussed within the Confidential Report (Item 15.4.1.).

**ATTACHMENTS**

There are no supporting documents for this report.

**oooO END OF REPORT Oooo**



# Ordinary Meeting

# End of Business Paper

This business paper has been produced electronically to reduce costs, improve efficiency and reduce the use of paper. Internal control systems ensure it is an accurate reproduction of Council's official copy of the business paper.