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**REPORT OF GENERAL MANAGER**  
**POLICY, RESOURCES AND RESERVES COMMITTEE**

**TUESDAY, 12 JUNE 2012**

**STRATEGIC PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

**1. Future Use of Public Amenities - Wharf Road Berry**

**File 30090E**

**PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

To advise Council on the current situation with the public amenities located at Wharf Road, Berry and to consider options for the public amenities future use.

**RECOMMENDED that the Wharf Road, Berry public amenities be decommissioned and demolished.**

**COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN**

- Objective:** 4.5 A Council that is accountable and sustainable.
- Strategy:** 4.5.2 Manage Council's finances and resources in accordance with the Resourcing Strategy.
- 4.5.5 Assess and rationalise Council's property portfolio to ensure that the properties held in Council's ownership are suitable and necessary for the community's needs.

**DELIVERY PROGRAM**

- Activity:** 4.5.1.8 Implement Council's Asset Management Policy using the Asset Management Strategy to manage existing infrastructure assets, having regard to risk, resource capacity, equity, lifecycle management and levels of service.
- Activity** 4.5.5.1 Implement the Asset Management Improvement Plan  
Develop strategies to manage Council's property portfolio for best value community outcomes.

**OPTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

**Option 1:**

Council decommission and demolish the Wharf Road, Berry public amenities and make good the area for reserve use.

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### ***Implications***

- loss of public amenities and travel of 2km to the next available public amenities;
- savings on operating costs; and
- environmental concern addressed of seep away sewer.

### ***Option 2:***

Council decommission the current Wharf Road, Berry public amenities and replace with a fully compliant accessible public amenity. The reserve has low utilisation and is used mainly for dis/embarkation of activities in the waterway and not for passive recreation.

### ***Implications***

- no travel for users of boat ramp;
- addresses environmental issue of sewer;
- whole of life cost over \$600,000; and
- Berry community groups have identified higher priority public amenities in CBD.

### ***Option 3:***

Council refurbish the current Wharf Road, Berry public amenities and improve sewer retention and power connections. These upgraded public amenities will still not comply with current accessibility legislation.

### ***Implications***

Toilet will not comply with accessibility standards.

## **REPORT DETAILS**

### ***Introduction:***

Shoalhaven City Council has over 130 public amenities buildings. The provision of public amenities is an integral part of the provision of other services such as:

- waterway facilities;
- commercial/shopping centres; and
- parks/reserves.

# Shoalhaven City Council currently provides eight public amenities in the Berry precinct - details of locations are available through National Public toilet map or Council's website (see **Attachment 'A'**).

### ***Background:***

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Council officers are currently reviewing the Asset Management Plan (AMP) for all public amenities (toilets).

The Wharf Road, Berry public amenities currently require improvements to the sewer retention and in the near future will require upgrading of water and power connections

The public amenities at Wharf Road, Berry were identified as low use from the AMP review process in 2005 and identified for asset disposal. No unfavourable comment was received during the community consultation process in relation to the proposed asset disposal in 2005.

Since the detailed AMP was adopted in 2005, Council has constructed new public amenities on Alexandra Street, Berry in 2006.

Council Officers have:

- corresponded with the Berry Alliance which advertised the proposal on page seven in the Berry Crier for June 2011 edition;
- written to the adjoining landowners;
- had a notice firmly secured within the public amenities since November 2011; and
- placed a notice on Council's website in relation to the proposal.

Council has received three letters requesting review of the proposal to decommission the public amenities. These all related to an adventure group which used the boat ramp for dis/embarcation in April 2012. The Berry Alliance supports the decommissioning of the public amenities.

### ***Key Issues:***

The public amenities at Wharf Road, Berry:

- require improvements to sewer and in the near future will require upgrades to water and electricity;
- have very low patronage;
- were constructed in 1974. Since 1974 Council has constructed six other public amenities in the Berry area that are of greater benefit to patrons;
- do not comply with current accessibility legislation;
- are within a 2 kilometre drive to a number of other public amenities in Berry;
- are on a reserve with few other facilities, apart from the boat ramp which generally has low utilisation compared with the other boat ramps; and
- Council has over 1200 reserves.

Council has engaged with the community through:

- the community consultative body for Berry through letters and notices in Berry crier;
- the adjoining neighbours by letter;
- users of the reserve through notices in the public amenities; and

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- the community through Council's website.

### ***Resourcing Implications - Financial, Assets, Workforce:***

The decommissioning of the public amenities will incur a cost of approximately \$3,000. Materials could be salvaged such as roof materials and light fittings. Other materials such as concrete could be crushed and recycled. The public amenities have averaged an operating cost of approximately \$7,500 per annum which includes low (water, electricity, cleaning) costs, but has higher than normal vandalism, graffiti and sewerage control costs. The cleaners could have their timetable rescheduled to provide a service for Hampden Bridge, Kangaroo Valley public amenities or to provide higher service levels at other amenities. Estimated savings on operating costs are \$3,000 per annum for reduced maintenance costs and small savings on water and power (\$200 per annum) and insurance (\$125 per annum).

Alternatively the cost to refurbish public amenities and improve water, sewer and electricity connections and connect paths and parking to improve access is estimated at \$25,000.

The cost to demolish and rebuild a single unisex public amenity closer to the road and services is estimated at \$55,000. Operating costs would be similar at \$7,500 per annum. The whole of life cost for a 50 year life at 3% inflation and allowing for programmed painting and renewal of sub asset components is over \$600,000.

### ***Community, Environment (ESD), Economic and Governance Impact:***

The Community Consultative Body (Berry Alliance) supports the proposal. Council received three letters from persons involved at one event opposing the decommissioning. This is the only feedback from the notice that has been in place for six months in the public amenities.

The sewer is a connected to a trench and is inappropriate given its close proximity to a water way.

The whole of life cost that includes initial capital value and all operating costs associated with the asset over its life shows a large financial commitment of public funds for these low use public amenities when there is greater demand for investment in assets in other locations that provide a greater benefit to the community.

The public amenities met the needs of the community when first constructed and since then Council has constructed six other public amenities in Berry that can meet the need of users of the reserve.

The public amenities' decommissioning is in accordance with Council's task of assessing and rationalising Council's property portfolio to ensure that the properties held in Council's ownership are suitable and necessary for the community's needs.

## **CONCLUSION**

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The public amenities have served the community well. The demand for its benefit can easily be met with other facilities with minimal inconvenience. It would be more efficient and sustainable to invest in other assets that will provide greater benefit to the community in whole.

