



AGENDA  
of the  
SPECIAL MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 12 FEBRUARY 2020

at

Murrindindi Shire Council  
Council Chamber  
Perkins Street  
Alexandra

11.00 am

\*\* Audio recordings of all Council meetings are taken by Council's Governance Officers and published on Council's website. (Resolution of Council 23 January 2019)

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- 1. PLEDGE AND RECONCILIATION STATEMENT**
- 2. APOLOGIES AND REQUESTS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE**
- 3. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST OR CONFLICT OF INTEREST**
- 4. OUR PROMISE**

#### **4.1 TREE SERVICES PANEL EXPENDITURE**

##### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to propose an increase in financial delegation to the Chief Executive Officer in relation to the engagement of contractors under Council's Tree Services Panel, to address two recent storm events.

##### **Officer Recommendation**

###### **That Council:**

- 1. authorise an increase in the financial delegation to the Chief Executive Officer for the sole purpose of procuring services under Council's Tree Services Panel (CONT17/31) to a maximum value of \$650,000 (Ex GST) for emergency works to address the damage caused by recent storm events (22 & 24 January 2020 and 1 February 2020)**
- 2. approve the increase in the anticipated total expenditure for Contract17/31 from \$625,000 to \$1,325,000 (incl. GST).**

##### **Background**

In March 2018 Council resolved to establish a panel for Tree and Weed Services. The panel included the following categories:

- a) Standard emergency response and clean up
- b) General tree works
- c) Tree root maintenance
- d) Tree planting, maintenance and establishment
- e) Pest and disease management.

The Chief Executive Officer is delegated by Council under section 98(1) of the *Local Government Act 1989* to award a contract up to the value of \$150,000 for operating expenses.

##### **Discussion**

The municipality has experienced two significant storm events in the last 3 weeks. The first event occurred over two days, 15 January 2020 and 19 January 2020. The second event occurred on 1 February 2020.

Approved contractors engaged as part of the Tree Services Panel have been working to assist Council to assess dangerous trees (arborist works), remove debris, prune and remove dangerous trees. These works are deemed as urgent works.

The expenditure associated with this engagement is being monitored and the CEO has been authorising the works under the panel contract. Due to the extent of the damage caused by the storms the expenditure associated with the two events is anticipated to exceed the amount delegated by Council to the CEO. A variation to this delegation is being proposed to allow Council to minimise risk associated with the damaged trees across the municipality in a timely manner.

Current estimates indicate that the cost for the works associated with these storm events are in the order of \$500,000 - \$600,000.

**Council Plan/Strategies/Policies**

The *Council Plan 2017-2021* Our Promise theme commits Council to maintaining Council's financial sustainability through sound financial and asset management.

The Our Place theme emphasises Council's commitment to the protection of the natural environment and community safety.

**Relevant Legislation**

The Chief Executive Officer is delegated by Council under the *Local Government Act 1989* to perform roles on its behalf. The variation to this delegation is being proposed to Council in an effort to ensure that Council can provide a level of service to the community and adhere to its legislated responsibilities.

**Financial Implications and Risk**

As part of the confidential tender report presented to Council at its meeting on 28 March, 2018, it was estimated that Council would spend approximately \$625,000 over the five year contract period on these works. Due to the two unexpected storm events within a three week period, it is now expected that the estimated spend will be increased to \$1,325,000 (incl. GST).

These emergency works are required to address the significant risk to the public resulting from fallen timber, suspended limbs and trees that have been made structurally unsound.

Funds to support these works will be initially allocated from the current infrastructure operations budget. This is involving a re-assessment of maintenance priorities, and will most likely necessitate a revision to Council's annual budget at the March 2020 quarterly budget review.

A notification of intent to seek Natural Disaster Financial Assistance has been forwarded to Emergency Management Victoria which, if accepted, may help offset some of the additional costs to Council of these emergency works.

**Conflict of Interest**

There are no declared conflicts of interest in relation to the creation of this report.

**Community and Stakeholder Consultation**

No external consultation was required in relation to this report.