



# **GYMPIE REGIONAL COUNCIL**

## **MINUTES**

*of the*

## **SPECIAL MEETING**

**CHAIRMAN: Cr MW Curran (Mayor)**

**Held in the Boardroom**

**Town Hall**

**2 Caledonian Hill**

**Gympie Qld 4570**

**On Tuesday, 24 December 2019**

**At 11.00am**



Gympie Regional Council **SPECIAL**

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*Mayor MW Curran (Chairman)*

*Crs MA McDonald, GC Hartwig, MS Gear, DW Dodt, DH Stewart, HT Smerdon, WR Leitch and RA Fredman.*

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3.1 NEW YEAR'S EVE CELEBRATIONS	
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**The meeting commenced at 11.01am.**

**PRESENT:** Mayor Cr MW Curran (Chairman), Crs MA McDonald, GC Hartwig, MS Gear, DW Dodt, DH Stewart, HT Smerdon, WR Leitch and RA Fredman.

Also in attendance were Acting Chief Executive Officer and Director Corporate and Community Services (Ms P Gordon), Director Planning and Development (Ms G Vereker), Manager Gympie Venues and Events (Mr L Harriman), and Minutes Clerk (Ms S Lowe).

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Cr Dan Stewart gave the following acknowledgement:

Let me acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet today, I pay my respects to the elders of the past, present and emerging.

**SECTION 1: APOLOGIES / LEAVE OF ABSENCE****SECTION 2: DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

**SECTION 3: OFFICE OF THE CEO****3.1 New Year's Eve Celebrations**

**PORTFOLIO:** Tourism, Environment and Special Projects

**DIRECTORATE:** Office of the CEO

**DOC ID:**

**LINKS TO CORPORATE/OPERATIONAL PLAN****STRATEGIC THEMES:**

2. Our Community – active, diverse, creative and engaged
  5. Our Organisation – accountable, responsive, efficient and innovative
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**1. BACKGROUND AND PREVIOUS COUNCIL CONSIDERATION**

Through Council's procurement processes, Council has engaged independent event coordinator, Sarah Niemand and Gympie Hammers Rugby Club (GHRC) to plan and deliver the New Year's Event 2019 on Council's behalf.

Under this agreement, Ms. Niemand and GHRC and are responsible for booking the entertainment for the event including the finale entertainment which has traditionally been a fireworks display.

Recent dry conditions have led to another challenging bush fire season and there is growing public sentiment about the appropriateness of fireworks based on safety and cost.

In QLD, fireworks displays are regulated by two State Government Agencies, namely the Queensland Fire and Emergency Service (QFES) and Queensland Explosives Inspectorate of the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy (DNRME).

Fire bans do not apply to fireworks display performed by Licensed Fireworks Display Companies. However, under fire ban conditions all fireworks display are risk assessed by QFES including Indoor Fireworks, Close Proximity and Stadium Fireworks. In terms of safety, the pyrotechnics industry is highly regulated and the risk of fireworks starting a fire is considered low.

A detailed risk assessment is completed and provisions are made to ensure that the risk to community safety is at its lowest risk value.

An exemption for the NYE fireworks event has been obtained from QFES by Ms. Niemand as the event organiser and is attached.

In terms of cost, the fireworks at the NYE event at Nelson Reserve is \$5,500 including GST. This is a more affordable option than laser shows or projection finales. See budget implications below.

Some community members have expressed a desire to see funds donated to local families, groups and charities directly affected by the drought or recent bush fires.

The Gympie Ministers Network flagged with council officers that they intended to remove fireworks from their event so informal feedback was sought from Council on the 11 December as to whether Gympie Regional Council would follow suit at the New Year's Eve Event in Nelson Reserve.

At the time Council supported fireworks going ahead, however no formal decision was made. Since that time a number of other councils have determined a position, hence officers requiring a formal position.

Council has released information about the 2019 New Year's Eve event on Wednesday, 18 December via social media. There has been a small number of responses questioning the decision to proceed with fireworks.

## 2. REPORT

Community sentiment to cancel fireworks across Australia has swelled over recent months due to the impact of the bush fire season experienced in November and December this year and continued drought conditions. Nationwide, Councils are taking a variety of positions regarding fireworks in their areas.

Councils closest to Gympie Region are taking the following position:

Brisbane City Council	Proceeding with NYE fireworks
Sunshine Coast Council	Proceeding with NYE fireworks Raising money for QCWA on night.
Noosa Council	Does not present their own NYE event.
South Burnett Regional Council	Does not present their own NYE event.
Redlands City Council	Cancelled Christmas fireworks
Moreton Bay Regional Council	Cancelled Christmas fireworks
Fraser Coast Council	Proceeding with NYE fireworks
North Burnett Regional Council	Does not present their own NYE event.
Gold Cast City Council	Cancelled NYE fireworks
Bundaberg Regional Council	Cancelled NYE event including fireworks
Gladstone Regional Council	Proceeding with fireworks

At this late stage it is not possible to arrange an alternative finale for the NYE event. Demand for laser shows has increased exponentially and enquiries have determined companies are fully booked.

Council Officers have also explored digital projection mapping similar to the Red for Remembrance project last year where Town Hall and trees in

Memorial Park were lit up with images of ANZACs and poppies. This option is unable to be delivered within budget.

There have been a number of discussions between representatives from the Bendigo Bank, Gympie Hammers Rugby Club and council officers about the sensitivity of what is considered a very volatile fire season and whether to proceed with the fireworks. Stakeholders also considered the approval provided by the Regional Manager, Rural Fire Service, North Coast Region Queensland Fire and Emergency Services who is satisfied appropriate measures have been taken to minimise the risk of bushfire and approved an exemption from the Local Fire ban for a fireworks display.

As a result, officers propose that the fireworks proceed as planned given the approval from QFES. In addition, the Gympie Hammer's Rugby Club have requested support from Council to use this event to launch their fundraising campaign for the Widgee Rural Fire unit so they can purchase much needed communication equipment that would have aided their efforts during the recent Blacksnake Mountain fires. The Widgee Rural Fire Unit have also agreed to be present on the night and bring some of their vehicles to Nelson Reserve to raise awareness.

### **3. BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

#### Fireworks Show

GHRC has engaged professional pyrotechnics company, Skylighter Entertainment to supply and fire this year's fireworks show. In consultation with council officers, Skylighter have agreed to use some of the product left over from Gold Rush Festival 2019 (which was impacted by wet weather) to reduce the costs of fireworks at NYE 2019.

The total cost for fireworks will be \$5500.00 Inc. GST reduced from \$7000.

Other alternatives considered and dismissed.

#### No Fireworks Display

The total cost for fireworks will be \$5500.00 Inc. GST has been awarded to deliver this component of the event. These costs will be incurred irrespective of Council's decision to progress the fireworks or not. The contractor will still require payment.

#### Laser show

Quote received on 10 December was \$12,000 + GST and only guaranteed quote for 24hrs. At that time, this was the last company in South East Queensland still available to deliver a laser show because of the increased demand from Council's across Queensland. This alternative is no longer possible.

#### Digital Projection

Quote from Artist who presented the Red for Remembrance projections in Memorial Park and Town Hall in November 2018 was:

- Option One - \$15,000  
2 projectors and all other associated costs/visuals/setup/pull down
  - Option Two - \$19,000  
3 projectors and all other associated cost/visuals/setup/ pulldown
- The likelihood of still securing digital projection within the time frame left is very low.

#### **4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

Nil

#### **5. CONSULTATION**

Consultation has been undertaken with the following stakeholders:

- Coordinator Local Disaster Management Group
- Manager Marketing and Communications
- President Gympie Hammers Rugby Club
- Independent Event Coordinator
- Chair Gympie Branch Bendigo Bank (Sponsor)
- Officer Events, Major Events Team (also a licensed Pyro-technician)

#### **6. CONCLUSION**

Marketing for the New Year's Eve 2019 event have already commenced and there are no available alternatives to replace the fireworks as an event finale.

Whilst there has been some negative feedback from the community regarding the plan to continue with fireworks, there is minimal fire risk from proceeding.

The opportunity for Gympie Hammers Rugby Club to raise funds for a local group directly affected by recent bush fires in Gympie Region positively addresses concerns about the fireworks.

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. [QFES Approved Exemption to Local Fire Ban](#)



**M18/12/19 Moved Cr DH Stewart Seconded Cr MS Gear**

**That Council proceed with the fireworks planned for New Year's Eve 2019 in Nelson Reserve.**

**Carried**

**FOR:** Cr MA McDonald, Cr DW Dodt, Cr MS Gear, Cr GC Hartwig, Cr HT Smerdon and Cr DH Stewart

**AGAINST:** Cr MW Curran, Cr WR Leitch and Cr RA Fredman

**M19/12/19 Moved Cr MA McDonald Seconded Cr DW Dodt**

**That Council Support Gympie Hammers Rugby Club request to use this event as its fundraising launch to support local groups affected by recent bush fires.**

**Carried**

**FOR:** Cr MW Curran, Cr MA McDonald, Cr WR Leitch, Cr DW Dodt, Cr MS Gear, Cr GC Hartwig, Cr HT Smerdon, Cr DH Stewart and Cr RA Fredman

**AGAINST:** Nil

#### **Perceived Conflict of Interest – Cr Dan Stewart**

Cr Stewart declared a Perceived Conflict of Interest in this matter due to being a member of the rural fire brigade. As he doesn't feel this will affect his ability to deal with the matter he requested to remain in the meeting while the matter was discussed and voted on.

#### **Resolving Perceived Conflict of Interest - Cr Dan Stewart**

**M20/12/19 Moved Cr MA McDonald Seconded Cr DW Dodt**

**That Cr Stewart remains in the meeting while the matter is discussed and votes on.**

**Carried**

**FOR:** Cr MW Curran, Cr MA McDonald, Cr WR Leitch, Cr DW Dodt, Cr MS Gear, Cr GC Hartwig, Cr HT Smerdon and Cr RA Fredman

**AGAINST:** Nil

**3.2 Mayoral Minute – Community Event****M21/12/19 Moved Cr MW Curran**

**That Council host a community event at the end of the fire season to celebrate and thank all of our dedicated rural and regional fire brigades and emergency services personnel.**

**Carried**

**FOR:** Cr MW Curran, Cr MA McDonald, Cr WR Leitch, Cr DW Dodt, Cr MS Gear, Cr GC Hartwig, Cr HT Smerdon, Cr DH Stewart and Cr RA Fredman

**AGAINST:** Nil

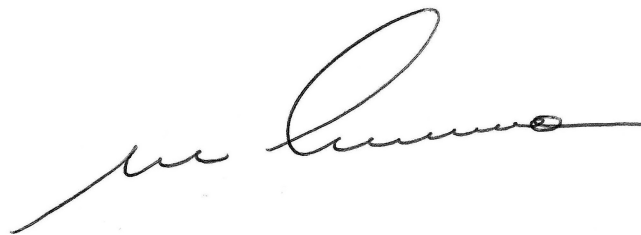
**SECTION 4: ATTACHMENTS**

3.1 **New Year's Eve Celebrations**

ATTACHMENT 1 QFES APPROVED EXEMPTION TO LOCAL FIRE BAN ..... 10

There being no further business the meeting closed at 11.37am.

Confirmed this TWENTY-SECOND day of JANUARY 2020



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Cr MW Curran  
CHAIRMAN



**Rural Fire Service**

**Queensland Fire and  
Emergency Services**

12 December 2019

Sarah Niemand  
Event Manager  
Gympie Hammers Rugby Union Club

Via Email: sarah.niemand.sn@gmail.com

Dear Sarah

Thank you for your enquiry in relation to conducting a fireworks display at Nelson Reserve, Cnr Jaycee Way & Monkland Streets, Gympie during the declaration of a Local Fire Ban.

Under Section 86A of the Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990, a Local Fire Ban was imposed in the Local Government areas of Gympie Regional Council, Fraser Coast Regional Council, Bundaberg Regional Council, North Burnett Regional Council, South Burnett Regional Council, Noosa Shire Council, Sunshine Coast Regional Council and Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council taking effect from 17:00 hrs Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> of December 2019 until 23:55 hrs Friday 20<sup>th</sup> of December 2019, as specified in the Local Fire Ban Declaration.

During Local Fire Bans there are some exemptions, such as BBQ's, and fires of commercial necessity. This is subject to permission from the Chief Fire Warden. Also during Local Fire Bans there is a focus on the use of naked flame in the open as it is a potential source of ignition of vegetation.

I have completed the necessary risk assessment following the provision of detailed information provided by you and I am satisfied appropriate measures have been taken to minimise the risk of bushfire. Therefore, approval is granted for an exemption from the Local Fire Ban for a fireworks display located at Nelson Reserve, Cnr Jaycee Way & Monkland Streets, Gympie from 20:30 hrs to 21:30 hrs on Tuesday the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2019.

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Maryborough Queensland 4650  
Australia  
Telephone +61 07 4190 4836  
Website [www.ruralfire.qld.gov.au](http://www.ruralfire.qld.gov.au)  
ABN 93 035 163 778

Should you require any further assistance, please contact me on telephone (07) 41904821, mobile 0407149164 or email [Peter.Hollier@qfes.qld.gov.au](mailto:Peter.Hollier@qfes.qld.gov.au).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Peter Hollier', written over a light blue horizontal line.

**Peter Hollier AFSM  
Regional Manager  
Rural Fire Service  
North Coast Region  
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services**