



# Mullet Mail

## NEWS & VIEWS OF DANGAR ISLAND RESIDENTS

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**This Express Edition of the Mullet Mail is to let Island residents know the outcome of our recent meeting with our new Mayor.**

On Thursday 16 November, representatives of the Dangar Island League (Trevor Kanaley, Vanessa O'Keefe and Ross Spence) and Dangar Island Vehicle Management Committee (Judy Nikola) met with the Mayor, the Honourable Councillor Philip Ruddock to discuss the buggy and utility vehicle on Dangar Island and the role of Council and the Dangar community in their continuing provision and operation. Also present were Councillor Warren Waddell from Ward A, Councillor Michael Hutchence from Ward C, and Council officers Stephen Fedorow (Acting General Manager), and Peter Coad (Acting Manager, Environment & Human Services). We sincerely thank the Council representatives for their involvement and interest, and are committed to working in a spirit of cooperation with Council to resolve outstanding issues.

The history of the existing arrangements was canvassed, including Council's role in creating a pedestrian precinct on the Island with the two pillars of a buggy and ute to facilitate transport needs. The Mayor fully appreciated the importance of these vehicles to the Island's residents and referred to the many letters he had received detailing the problems many older, ill and disabled residents would face if the vehicles no longer operated. The role of the utility in assisting with the work of other government agencies, such as Sydney Water in undertaking repairs to sewerage pumps and with the Dangar Island Rural Fire Brigade was also noted.

Different models of possible provision of these vehicles were discussed. Cr. Waddell indicated an awareness of our island situation and the need to find practical answers to resolving the issues. The Mayor indicated a strong view that council was there to provide services to the community and that red tape should be reduced and bureaucracy minimised. For their part residents, in a unique situation like the river communities, must play a part in contributing to the funding of services unique to their situation. It was agreed the existing arrangements for the buggy have been working well, but that it was timely to look at the accounting arrangements around the collection of fees and financial reporting to ensure they continue to meet the needs of Council.

### **The meeting reached the following decisions.**

1. Council would continue to be involved in the provision of the buggy and the utility vehicle.
2. The Constitution and Procedures Manual of the existing Dangar Island Vehicle Management Committee (DIVMC), which operates the buggy, are to be amended to allow this 377 Committee of Council to also operate the utility vehicle.
3. Council is to continue to provide and maintain the buggy and the ute including the provision of necessary insurances.
4. The accounting and financial arrangements for the operation of the buggy and the ute are to be reviewed by the DIVMC and Council officers, to ensure they are appropriate and meet fiduciary requirements.

5. The DIVMC and Council officers are to review the fees and charges for both the buggy and the ute to ensure they meet, as far as possible, the costs of providing these vehicles. Council accepts that some cross subsidies between vehicles may be necessary.
6. Within the constraints noted above, Council recognises the DIVMC is run by volunteers and the new arrangements are to keep red tape to a minimum.

Overall, the meeting looked at what was working and found a practical solution to the Island's transport needs. The League would like to thank our new Mayor for chairing the meeting and bringing fresh eyes to an issue which has been unresolved over the past year. The League would also like to thank the more than thirty Island residents who made the effort to write to the Mayor, often describing their personal situation, and why a continuing Council involvement in providing the buggy and the ute is important. These letters were an important backdrop to the decisions taken.

While directions are now clear, this is not a business as usual outcome. It now falls to the DIVMC, a committee of Council, working closely with Council officers, to take this forward. The DIVMC has written to Council seeking their views on how they see advancing this matter. There is still ample scope for issues to arise which will require a collegial partnership with Council to satisfactorily resolve.

While all this will take some time, in writing to Council the DIVMC has asked that, in the interim, the Ute be returned to the Island under the existing operating arrangements.

The meeting also discussed the Dangar Island Community Hall and garbage collection arrangements.

Problems in managing all community halls within the new arrangements for the Shire were discussed. The League representatives passed over a letter for Mr Fedorow outlining the problems our small island community volunteer associations are experiencing in their use of the hall. For example, insurance costs are forcing the Dangar Island Historical Society to seek an alternative venue for their AGM. The Mayor was aware of such concerns across the Shire and has directed council officers to resolve the situation as the Council wishes to support volunteer community associations and build local communities.

With respect to garbage collection arrangements, the lack of an adequate response to DIL's letter of December 2016 was raised. Specific and continuing challenges being faced by Riverview Ave waterfront property owners in particular were discussed. The Mayor appreciated that these were not insignificant, and Council staff have agreed to meet with affected residents and resolve these as a matter of urgency.

**Thankyou,**

**Dangar Island League Committee**

