

Item 10: Operations

10.1 Crown Land Beryls Reserve

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OPERATIONS
TO 16 AUGUST 2023 ORDINARY MEETING
GOV400103, A0220005, P0930111

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. **receive the report by the Director Operations on Crown Land Beryls Reserve; and**
 2. **complete the matters in progress No 347/20.**
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Executive summary

Council at its Ordinary meeting 18/11/2020 resolved:

That a report be brought back to Council on the provision of additional maintenance to the area of road and roadside along the section of Mebul Road along the Cudgegong River at the old crusher site.

Staff have undertaken an assessment of the road area only to provide some additional maintenance to allow better access to the site. It should be noted the roads within the site are not Council maintained roads. Consideration has been given to providing improved access to the river not all internal tracks.

The reserve is not actively maintained by Council and no budget exists for this purpose. A small budget could be dedicated to this reserve as part of the consideration of the Community Lands Management Plan that is yet to be adopted by Council.

Disclosure of Interest

Nil

Detailed report

Location

The Crown Land Reserve known as Beryls Reserve is off Mebul Road. The land is Crown Land and is vested in Council as the land manager. A draft Community Lands Management Plan guides the uses and development of the land. The area of land is approximately 90.85 hectares and is accessed via the unsealed section of Mebul Road. The land adjoins the Cudgegong River and has been used for decades as a local swimming location during summer and some camping in winter. There is evidence on site of recent camp fires indicating people are still readily accessing the site. The site in its current condition remains a nice place for the community to visit.



Image – Beryls Reserve

Internal tracks

The site has two entrances off Mebul Rd, one at the eastern most end and one to the western most end.

The site has a number of internal tracks that access areas of the site but primarily the river. The track that runs along the top of the site, generally parallel to Mebul Rd, connects the two entrances and is heavily eroded and would be suitable to 4WD vehicles only. This track is not essential to access the river.

The western entry to the site is accessible and the tracks from this point leading to the river are trafficable, however most suitable to 4WD vehicles. Some 2WD vehicles maybe suitable. Once you get close to the river bank the track is sandy gravel as you are essentially in the extended river bed. This is suitable to 4WD vehicles only.

The track from the western end of the site would require upgrading to provide all vehicle all weather access. This would include grading and resheeting and piped drainage in places. The cost to upgrade the track would be approximately \$40,000 and includes:

- 1km x 3m wide with 100mm of gravel;
- 3 sets of small pipes.

The cost to grade this road annually once upgraded is approximately \$2,000.

Due to its location adjacent to the Cudgegong River and issues with the road flooding it is likely it will need resheeting say every 7-10yrs. Re-sheeting is currently \$30K per/km.

Council did undertake some very minor works to a small section of road approximately two years ago while plant and equipment were on Mebul road to improve access.

Options

1. Leave the tracks in the current condition that provide limited access throughout the site but reasonable access to the river noting access is currently available;
2. Upgrade a section of the tracks from the western end to improve access to the river for a greater type of vehicles except where the base becomes sandy and would regularly be affected by floods or high / fluctuating water levels. Dedicate a budget of \$40,000 for the road works and an on-going budget of \$5,000p/a for recreation services to undertake basic maintenance of the site.
3. Upgrade all tracks through the site. A recent inspection of the site has revealed this would require extensive works. This has not been costed as part of this report but can be done on Councils request.

Any proposed works should be undertaken in line with the Objectives and Key Performance Targets of the Community Plan of Management.

Community Plan of Management

Beryls Reserve is Crown Land managed by Council. Under the draft Community Land Plan of Management (CLPoM) the area is defined as Natural Area Bushland with a purpose of public recreation. Core objectives of this category of land under the CLPoM are to:

- ensure the ongoing ecological viability of the land by protecting the ecological biodiversity and habitat values of the land, the flora and fauna (including invertebrates, fungi and microorganisms) of the land and other ecological values of the land.
- protect the aesthetic, heritage, recreational, educational and scientific values of the land.
- promote the management of the land in a manner that protects and enhances the values and quality of the land and facilitates public enjoyment of the land, and to implement measures directed to minimising or mitigating any disturbance caused by human intrusion.
- restore degraded bushland.
- protect existing landforms such as natural drainage lines, watercourses and foreshores.
- retain bushland in parcels of a size and configuration that will enable the existing plant and animal communities to survive in the long term.
- protect bushland as a natural stabiliser of the soil surface.

Permissible uses and development on Bushlands lands may include:

- access roads
- alternate energy technology
- biodiversity enhancement
- dog training and exercise
- drainage
- emergency use
- filming and photography of events,
- speeches, concerts etc. (commercial, amateur)
- fitness and wellbeing programs
- grazing
- maintenance activities
- natural areas
- passive recreation paths
- personal training
- public utilities and/or works
- associated with relevant legislation (bushfire, telecommunications etc)
- public utility infrastructure
- recycling (Return & Earn stations)
- remediation works
- rest areas
- telecommunication facilities.
- temporary compounds

Community Plan implications

Theme	Looking After Our Community
Goal	Meet the diverse needs of the community and create a sense of belonging
Strategy	Provide equitable access to a range of places and spaces for all in the community

Strategic implications

Council Strategies

Draft Community Land Plan of Management.

Council Policies

Nil

Legislation

Crown Lands Management Act 2016

Financial implications

The road within Beryls Reserve does not form part of Councils road network either as a maintained or unmaintained Council or Crown road. It is largely an internal track on this parcel of crown land. As such the tracks are not funded as part of Councils roads capital or maintenance program.

Should Council wish to fund upgrading this road or allocate maintenance costs, funding should be provided as part of the management of the Crown Land parcel and as part of maintenance of the entire site. Funding could be considered from unrestricted cash.

To provide an upgraded road as detailed in the report \$40,000 could be allocated from unrestricted cash. To fund on-going basic maintenance of the site an allocation of \$5,000p/a could be made from unrestricted cash. There is a current unrestricted cash balance of \$9.9M

Associated Risks

Traditionally access to this site has been limited to appropriate weather conditions and the condition of the internal tracks.

Should Council wish to improve access to a higher standard this may attract greater numbers of people to the site and create the need for additional servicing of the area or at least that expectation. There is the possibility the site could be accessed by free campers and certain types of off road camper vans if access is improved to a higher standard. The site lends itself to an area where a low level of amenity should be expected i.e. no bins, people take their rubbish with them.

The site is currently not maintained by Council and people enter the site at their own risk as conditions allow. The river bank area is subject to fluctuating water levels, river debris etc. as can be expected by the natural river environment.



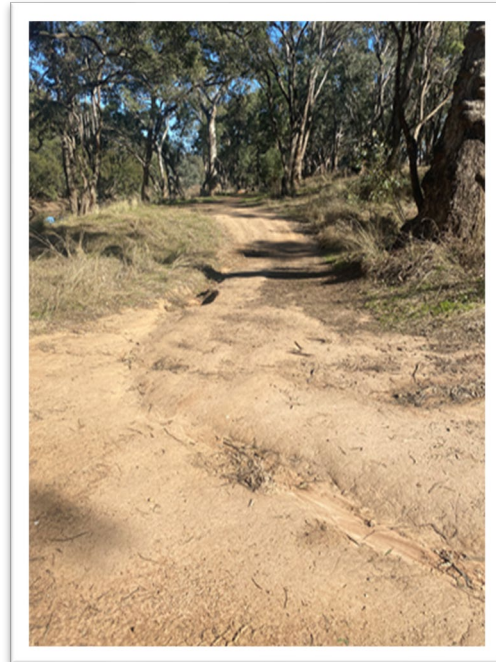
Entry to site. Accessible 2WD



Internal tracks to river. Sandy base 4WD only.



Internal tracks to river. Possible 2WD with clearance.



Internal track to river. 2WD with clearance.



Internal tracks to river. Possible 2WD with clearance.



Sandy track at river bank 4WD only.



Eroded track.



Eroded track. Toward eastern entry.



Eroded track. 4WD only.



Eroded track. 4WD only.

JULIAN GEDDES
DIRECTOR OPERATIONS

13 July 2023

Attachments: Nil

APPROVED FOR SUBMISSION:

BRAD CAM
GENERAL MANAGER