

PLEASE QUOTE

YOUR REFERENCE:

OUR REFERENCE: GW0704131117

ENQUIRIES TO: Mr Graham Webb  
[Insert Date]

The Secretary  
Mission Beach Community Association  
P O Box 170  
MISSION BEACH Q 4852

Dear Sir/Madam,

### **PROGRESS REPORT STATE OF 4852 MISSION BEACH REPORT JANUARY 2007**

Following my attendance at my first Meeting of your Association on Tuesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 2007, I am pleased to accept your Invitation to attend your next Meeting on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2007.

My attendance at your last Meeting gave no indication of the events that would unfold in my third and fourth months as Administrator of Johnstone Shire Council.

I look back on my response to questions on my participation with Cardwell Shire Council in progressing the Size, Shape and Sustainability (SSS) Agenda. I recall my response supporting continued participation in the SSS Agenda for an outcome that would ensure financial stability and a robust, efficient and sustainable Local Government System for residents and ratepayers of the Johnstone and Cardwell Shires.

I wasn't to know at the time of your last Meeting that there would be an announcement on 17<sup>th</sup> April, 2007, that the State Government by Legislation would end the SSS process and replace it with a comprehensive Reform of Queensland's Local Government Sector to provide a sustainable system.

Whilst I can't 'crystal ball gaze' or speculate on the future or the outcome of the Local Government Reform process and the views of the State Government, it would be reasonable to assume that the Mission Beach area will not be divided between two (2) Shires.

I am willing to brief the Meeting on Johnstone Shire Council's suggestion to the Local Government Reform Commission. I am also willing to provide your Meeting with information on the latest developments on Clump Point and Dunk Island Jetties and an update from Johnstone Shire Council's perspective on State of 4852 Mission Beach Report.

Cont'd/..

In relation to matters that have been raised either through your Association's correspondence or at your last Meeting I provide the following responses:-

### **Local Government Reform Process**

Prior to the deadline, the Johnstone Shire Council after consultation with the Community Reference Group; a Public Meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> May, 2007 (only 40 people attended) publicity through the Print and Electronic Media and publicity for the various options in my weekly 'Webb Page' in the Innisfail Advocate, Council has submitted its suggestions to the Local Government Reform Commission. Council's Report has been posted on the Johnstone Shire Council's web page [www.jsc.qld.gov.au](http://www.jsc.qld.gov.au)

The preparation of Council's suggestions for Reform was viewed as an opportunity to identify the best available amalgamation option for the residents of the Johnstone Shire.

Analysis of the range of options has identified that an amalgamation of Shires (some or all) in the FNQROC region has the potential to provide the most benefits, but also has a relatively high risk.

An alternative amalgamation of Cardwell, Hinchinbrook and Johnstone Shires (preferably incorporating areas South of Gordonvale) also has the potential to generate sufficient benefits to warrant the change.

Much has been said by our neighbouring Councils to the North (Cairns City) and to the South (Cardwell Shire) of concern at the possibility of amalgamation with the Johnstone Shire Council.

Whilst the likely option maybe the merging of Cardwell and Johnstone Shires, Council's suggestions to the Commission considers this option would not generate sufficient benefit to warrant the change and so is not supported.

At the time of my appointment I was aware of Johnstone Shire Council's financial position. It did not come as a surprise that the Queensland Treasury Corporation (QTC) identified Johnstone Shire Council as the most financially distressed.

Notwithstanding the Shire's financial status, together with Senior Management we see the challenges as opportunities. Collectively under my leadership with the Senior Management Team we are committed to framing a Budget and establishing a long term vision for this Shire that will be strategically focused with a mix of program adjustments/cuts and rate increases on the pathway to financial stability and providing a robust, efficient and sustainable Local Government.

The outcome of Johnstone Shire's suggestions to the Local Government Reform Commission and Parliament's decision on new Local Government areas for this State in September, 2007, is out of my control. I am committed to promoting this Shire and Community and the tremendous opportunities it offers for social, economic and environmentally sustainable development with a lifestyle and service delivery the envy of larger and smaller communities in this State. Solutions to the current financial position will not happen overnight.

However, difficult decisions will be made starting with this years Budget if long term financial sustainability is to be achieved.

### **Clump Point and Dunk Island Jetties**

As an update to your Association I advise that a detailed submission was submitted on behalf of the Mission Beach Marine Facilities Joint Board and the Johnstone Shire Council to the Director General of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation.

Restoration works for both jetties have been estimated at \$634,486.00. The Board's Insurer Suncorp has denied liability for a claim under the insurance policy. Officers of the Department and the Department of Emergency Services have also advised that the repair work may not qualify under the National Disaster Relief Arrangements.

With Members of the Mission Beach Marine Facilities Joint Board and Representatives from the Department of Emergency Services and the Department of Local Government, Planning Sport and Recreation an inspection was carried out of the facilities on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> May, 2007. As a result of this inspection and an expected report to be made on funding options for repairs to both facilities, the Board and our respective Councils expect advice in the very near future on the outcome for any funding approval and the ongoing management arrangements of the facilities.

### **State of the 4852 Mission Beach Report January, 2007**

At your last Meeting I promised to provide you with an update on Johnstone Shire Council's response to your Report. I apologise for the delay in responding.

It is acknowledged that the Director of Works and Services, Mr David Trotter, advised your Association by letter dated 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2007, that your Association should receive a response from Council within four weeks.

I am now in receipt of responses from Senior Officers to your Report and a copy is attached.

### **Conclusion**

I am aware that at your last Meeting I did not provide satisfactory answers to Questions on improved programmes for the Mission Beach area planned for the 2007/2008 financial year and in particular an aquatic facility for Mission Beach.

In relation to the Local Government Reform process the State Government has introduced Legislation that place some restrictions on Local Governments in adopting an expansionary approach to framing their 2007/2008 Local Government Budgets or making major draw downs on reserves prior to the conclusion of the Local Government Reform process. In this regard legislation provides that the State Government has the power to appoint a Financial Controller with powers to review particular decisions and actions of a Local Government.

Mission Beach Community Assoc, Mission Beach - Re Progress Report  
State of 4852 Mission Beach Report January 2007

Under the Terms and Conditions of my appointment I am charged with the responsibility of ensuring Council has sufficient funding for Council's planned Asset Management with borrowing limited for short term working capital or establishing a commercial debt structure for a commercialised business unit or corporatised corporation. You can see therefore, in the short term, the Council is unable to fund any new major capital works in your area.

In conclusion, I wish to state that I, personally, am optimistic that the Local Government Reform process will result in better community services; the retention and recruitment of highly qualified and dedicated staff within and to this area; and a more efficient and financially viable Local Government area. If the Local Government Reform Commission and the State Government redraw lines on maps and establish new Local Government areas that meet the above objectives it will be an excellent outcome for the Johnstone and Cardwell Shires and Local Governments in general as the sphere of Government closest to its constituents.

Yours faithfully



**GRAHAM WEBB PSM**  
**ADMINISTRATOR**  
**COUNCIL OF THE SHIRE OF JOHNSTONE**