17 Infrastructure and Assets Reports

17.1	**Franklin Cenotaph Relocation Project**
Report Number	17.001/26*
Strategic Plan	1. An empowered, healthy and connected community 4. Vibrant towns and villages
File Reference	22/231
Responsible Officer	Manager Property and Recreation Services
Reporting Brief	Director Infrastructure and Assets presenting a report on Franklin Cenotaph Relocation Project
Conflict of Interest	No officer declared an interest under the *Local Government Act* 1993 (LGA 1993) in the preparation of this report.
Attachments	1. Summary of Engagement Franklin [**17.001/26*.1** - 25 pages]

Background

1. The Franklin Cenotaph is located on the Huon Highway directly opposite the Franklin Palais at Franklin and holds significant historical value to the community.

2. Currently, the memorial sits dangerously close to the Huon Highway, creating serious safety risks for people attending dawn services and other commemorative events.

3. In 2000, DIER (now the Department of State Growth) advised that ANZAC services could no longer be held at the current site, which was agreed upon by Council and RSL, leading to services being combined with Huonville.

4. However, a local community group has since restarted services at the location, which has brought these safety and access concerns back to the forefront.

5. In the past, Council has issued permits to the local community group to use Council controlled land between the Cenotaph and the highway for commemorative events. However, due to increasing safety concerns and changing traffic management requirements, Council officers are reluctant to support future ceremonies held at this location until the safety of the participants can be assured.

6. Cenotaphs, such as the one in Franklin, are not Council assets and Council is not the organiser of the commemorative events. However, with community safety and wellbeing as its top priority, Council took the lead in seeking alternative measures to mitigate the safety risk, while acknowledging the strong community desire to continue commemorative events at this location.

7. The 'Saluting Their Service Commemorative Grants Program' was open, and Council sought to apply for funding from this program for relocation of the Franklin Cenotaph with a proposed budget of $80,000 to $90,000.

8. This grant funding would have allowed Council to move the Cenotaph from its current location to a more suitable and safe location at the Village Green in Franklin.

9. Prior to submitting the grant application, Council undertook comprehensive community engagement to seek feedback on the proposed relocation.

10. The purpose of this Report is to outline the outcomes of the community engagement and to provide direction on the future of the cenotaph.

Council Policy

11. This project aligns with Council's heritage management approach and community engagement framework.

12. The Council does not have any specific policy relating to war memorial relocation; however, heritage preservation and community safety are key considerations.

Legislative Requirements

13. Any works on public land and heritage sites require appropriate approvals and permits.

14. There are no specific legislative requirements relating to this report.

Risk Implications

15. Reputation risk exists in relation to community expectations management and heritage preservation decisions.

16. Safety risks continue at the current memorial location during commemorative events.

17. Risks identified within this report will be considered in accordance with Council's Risk Management Policy (GOV-CORP 005).

Financial and Budgetary Risks

18. Grant funding of $80,000-$90,000 was available for the original relocation proposal.

19. Alternative solutions may require different funding arrangements and budget allocations.

20. Other than in-kind contributions, such as community consultation and project management, Council is not expected to absorb any additional cost and has to scope the alternative solutions within the grant received if successful.

21. The cenotaph is not a Council asset and is not maintained by Council. There are no immediate financial risks for Council as project costs would be grant-funded. However, should Council decide to create and own any infrastructure assets (e.g., footpaths), they would incur depreciation and maintenance costs and therefore need to be factored into the Council’s annual budget and the long-term financial plan.

Environmental Risks

22. Heritage impact considerations for any works around the memorial site.

23. Site conditions and the surrounding natural environment should be considered if any ground modifications are required.

24. The Council will take into consideration the impacts of climate change in all current and forthcoming strategies, policies, and work plans. This means that the ground works must consider the impact of climate change on riverine flooding and flash floods when selecting sites and treatment options.

Engagement

25. Engagement associated with this decision was undertaken at Consult Level in accordance with the Council's Community Engagement Framework and is detailed in the Engagement Summary Report included as Attachment 1 to this Report.

26. Community engagement was conducted over a 5-week period (2 December 2024 – 6 January 2025) using multiple platforms, including online surveys, on-site meetings, social media, and email communications.

27. Multiple engagement methods were used, including online surveys, on-site drop-in sessions, social media, email communications, and the Council newsletter.

28. Strong community participation with 83 responses received and approximately 20 community members attending the on-site session.

29. Following the completion of the formal engagement period, it emerged that a bus stop was being installed in proximity to the cenotaph. The project team was not aware of this bus stop installation during the engagement period. The subsequent discovery of this bus stop creates additional considerations that will be addressed in the scoping of alternative solutions for the memorial site.

Human Resource and Financial Implications

30. All human resource and financial implications are contained within the Council's annual budget.

31. Staff resources were allocated to manage the community engagement process and analyse feedback.

32. Future project implementation will require ongoing staff coordination and project management as an in-kind contribution from Council.

33. Regardless of the alternative solutions, their scope will be developed within the grant amount, and no additional funding will be required from Council.

Discussion

34. The community engagement revealed an overwhelming preference (82%) to retain the Franklin Cenotaph at its original location rather than relocating it to the Village Green.

35. Key community concerns included the memorial's significant historical and heritage value, its deliberate placement at the focal point of Franklin Village, and the symbolic positioning with the soldier facing the Palais Theatre, where honour rolls are displayed.

36. Community feedback strongly emphasised alternative solutions, including traffic management during services, landscaping improvements around the existing site, creation of lower-level gathering areas, and enhanced accessibility provisions.

37. Survey results showed 87.8% of respondents rated keeping the memorial at its original site as "very important" or "somewhat important" to them.

38. The community expressed preference for solutions such as temporary traffic management, improved signage, protective barriers, and site enhancements over wholesale relocation.

39. Strong themes emerged around heritage preservation, with community members noting the memorial's role as the most significant heritage feature in Franklin and its careful historical positioning.

40. Other improvement works were also suggested, including maintenance improvements, protective coating for the memorial, access ramps for disabled attendees, and enhanced landscaping.

41. This information will be used to inform the scoping of the alternative solution and development of the funding application.

42. While pursuing the external funding opportunities, Council will review any permit applications for commemorative events at the site under Council's current guidelines and policies.

43. Considering the close proximity of the gathering to a highway, Council officers will require the organiser to seek advice from a suitably qualified person and clearly demonstrate how safety risks to the participants can be mitigated.

44. Given the clear community direction, Council will pursue the grant application for alternative solutions that mitigate safety concerns while maintaining the current location.

Conclusion and Recommendation

45. The comprehensive community engagement has provided clear direction that the Franklin community strongly values retaining the cenotaph at its current location whilst seeking alternative solutions for safety and accessibility concerns.

46. Council should respect this community feedback and pursue alternative approaches that maintain the memorial's heritage significance whilst addressing identified safety issues through practical management solutions.

17.001/26*
RESOLVED
MOVED: Cr David O'Neill SECONDED: Cr Mark Jessop

That:

a) The Report on Franklin Cenotaph Relocation Project be received and noted.

b) Council acknowledges the community engagement outcomes showing a strong preference to retain the Franklin Cenotaph at its original location.

c) Council proceeds with the Saluting Their Service grant application for up to a maximum of $90,000 to address safety concerns at Franklin whilst having the Franklin Cenotaph remain at its current location and to undertake further community engagement for these alternative solutions that fall within the grant amount.

d) If the grant is secured, detailed plans are to be developed for the alternative options to enable safe commemorative events in proximity to the memorial.

e) While pursuing the external funding opportunities, Council will still consider granting permits for commemorative events on Council land adjacent to the Franklin Cenotaph, provided the applicant is able to clearly demonstrate how safety risks to the participants can be mitigated.

Cr Toby Thorpe, Cr Paul Gibson, Cr Debbie Armstrong, Cr David O'Neill, Cr Mark Jessop, Cr Amy Robertson and Cr Lukas Mrosek voted for the motion and Nil voted against the motion.

7 / 0 CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY