

Just taking note on river jury option

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DEPUTY Mayor Bob Abbot has won backing to slightly water down a Noosa River community jury recommendation that councillors agree "in principle" to taking over a greater management role from the State Government agencies.

Cr Abbot at Monday's committee meeting instead proposed the council to "take note" of the 18-6 jury decision for an agreement for Noosa Council to control the moorings, anchoring, commercial uses and jetty leases "and agree to progress the matter with the State Government".

And Mayor Noel Playford also amended another recommendation that the council agree in principle to a further 12 recommendations to be workshopped by councillors as to how they could be implemented through a user-pays system.

Cr Playford's change was for the council to "agree to utilise those recommendations, and supporting explanations in the development of a comprehensive strategy, in the associated discussions with the State Government's agencies".

Cr Abbot said agreeing in principle to a council river takeover was a commitment that "for me would be difficult to make under the circumstances".

The deputy mayor mentioned the jury's concerns about the risk involved and the affordability of council taking over management of the river, leading to possible higher rates.

"So all of those things are there. I just think it is inappropriate for this council to agree in principle to those recommendations without those things being discussed," Cr Abbot said.

"I am supportive in general terms of the Noosa Council taking some responsibility for what's happening with the moorings.

"What are we wanting to fix and how much is this community willing to pay to fix it? I think that's a valid question that needs to be asked."

Cr Tony Wellington said: "I agree with Cr Abbot, it makes good sense for us to take a slightly more precautionary approach while we do a little more delving into the probabilities and likelihoods of some of the recommendations."

Cr Wellington said the councillors had to date only been given some rough costing estimates and no estimates of potential revenues. Cr Sandy Bolton supported the council's wait-and-see approach.

She said as a community and also councillors, "we can only make good decisions based on appropriate information" and should not be "rushing headlong" into this.

Cr Joe Jurisevic agreed this was the right way to go given that there was not enough data available for the councillors to get their head around the proposals.

Cr Frank Wilkie thanked the jury and said this was obviously a very complex situation and he fully supported the council recommendation which "will allow the council to investigate further a course of action".

He said the State Government had not been managing the river as effectively as the community would like.