

## Laneways

**September 2020**

City of Palmerston is seeking community feedback on its draft Laneway Management Policy.

Laneways provide important pedestrian connectivity for many of our residents. Where concerns are raised around the safety of laneways and closure is requested, this Policy aims to provide a clear decision-making process to ensure that all impacts, treatments, and facts are considered.

### About Council's Laneways

1. There are 117 laneways across seven suburbs within City of Palmerston, namely Bakewell (12), Roseberry (9), Gray (11), Woodroffe (37), Driver (20), Moulden (24) and Marlow Lagoon (4).
2. Some laneways provide an overland flow path for stormwater during high rainfall events.
3. While laneways are not used in current subdivision planning they do provide an important link in the path network within those seven suburbs providing easier access to shops, schools, public transport and open spaces (parks and reserves).
4. The majority of laneways are constructed on land designated as road reserve; others are constructed on open space lots.
5. Laneways are not considered the cause of anti-social or criminal behaviour however they may be used opportunistically by a small minority within the community, which has caused concern for and impacted nearby residents.
6. The Control of Roads Act and Regulations describe the process to permanently close a laneway that includes public consultation and Ministerial consent.
7. Most laneways have underground services crossing or along them (typically power, water sewer, telecommunications and stormwater).

### Treatments to date

8. Council commenced trialing a range of treatments (laneway lighting and night-time closures) in April 2019.
9. There are now 19 laneways under temporary full-time (seven) or part-time (twelve) closure. A pair of installed gates costs approx. \$6,000, and night-time closures cost approx. \$5,500 per annum per laneway.
10. The laneways with temporary closures are located in Moulden (10), Woodroffe (7), Gray (1) and Driver (1).
11. Up to July 2020 Council has expended approximately \$450,000 on community consultation and implementing laneway trials and treatments.

## Development of the Laneway Management Policy - Research and Assessment

12. The initial analysis of laneway treatments was based on resident information and limited police statistics. Assessing laneway usage was limited to random on-site surveys.
13. Access to relevant information from government agencies and laneway use has improved significantly in recent months and now provides a substantial evidence base for decision making.
14. Council has three CCTV cameras available to record usage of laneways (e.g. pedestrians, cyclists, mobility scooters, time of day), it is proposed that 3 weeks of recording is undertaken when a formal request to close is received.
15. The majority of laneways do not have anti-social behaviour. This research will be undertaken when a request is made, and where anti-social behaviour is experienced, Council proposes to seek government agency assistance to address the cause or source of the behaviour as one of the responses to residents requests for laneway closures.
16. Alice Springs Town Council has undertaken the permanent closure of laneways with the total cost of survey and government fees ranging from \$10,000 to \$12,000; and the process taking up to two years. The adjoining property owners are required to make a combined \$4,000 initial payment and meet all final costs. The closed laneway is subdivided and amalgamated into adjoining properties.

### **DRAFT POLICY OUTLINE:**

17. A formal request for laneway closure requires the support of all abutting landowners, information on the reason for the request, and agreement on the subdivision of the land for amalgamation with abutting properties.
18. Council assessment of a request includes the collation of evidence and statistics from government agencies, possible government agency responses to anti-social behaviour, survey of nearby residents, measurement of laneway usage and calculation of laneway category.
19. Council's initial assessment and proposed response will be completed no later than three months from a formal request being received.
20. Council's initial response may be a) leave the laneway open, b) assess the effectiveness of a government agency response with or without a temporary treatment, or c) instigate a temporary full or part-time closure.
21. The draft policy requires the review of Council's initial response no later than twelve months after implementation to determine what action is to be taken.
22. Council will set the review period at the time of the initial assessment based on the nominated response as different responses may require different review periods.
23. Where a laneway is proposed for permanent closure the draft policy requires that the land be amalgamated with the abutting properties, abutting property owners contribute to the cost of closure, and payment for the portion of land acquired.
24. The draft policy nominates a \$500 fixed contribution from each abutting property owner towards the cost of processing a permanent closure, together with a methodology for determining the value of the closed portion of laneway to be amalgamated with an individual property.
25. When an easement is created to protect underground services this will impact on the options for how the subdivision of the closed laneway may occur. These options will be discussed with the property owners as part of Council's initial assessment.

A flow chart has been prepared to visualise the process.