

Report No.	19-203
<b>Decision Required</b>	

## LIVE STREAMING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS - SIX MONTH REVIEW

### 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. To report back to Council on the results of the live streaming six-month trial and to consider future live streaming opportunities for Horizons Regional Council meetings.

### 2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1. A six-month trial was undertaken by council staff to live stream Council Meetings (not committee or sub-committee meetings) to establish (among other things) the user experience, cost implications, resource commitment and technology capabilities/limitations.
- 2.2. The trial was a 'no-frills' operation that utilised existing conferencing equipment which is not ideally suited to live streaming. The service delivered a long range fixed view of the meetings from one of two cameras located at either end of the room. The view of the meeting room was interrupted every time a presentation or document was displayed to the meeting. The trial relied on the user having a Facebook account in order to view the live feed. Non Facebook users only option to view was a recorded version of the meeting posted to Horizons website a few days after the council meeting.
- 2.3. Despite the trial being promoted, the number of live stream viewers was very low. However, a greater number of viewers did enjoy the ability to view a recorded version of the meetings at a later date. Feedback of the customer experience was generally poor. Councillors with their backs to the camera, no zoom function, no indication as to who was speaking, inability to see the councillors when presentations were being screened, no idea where on the agenda the meeting was at, were just some of the points raised.
- 2.4. The trial was labour intensive and required staff to set aside other tasks in order to deliver on the trial. The communications representative alone, spent six additional hours per meeting to support the trial. The equipment was not easy to set-up and required a period of no less than 20 minutes to set up utilising several people. This set up time requirement caused delays where a Council meeting followed (for example) a workshop and the meetings were 'back-to-back'.
- 2.5. Overall, the trial found that ongoing live streaming is possible, in a very limited capacity, utilising current technology. Expanding the scope beyond that delivered in the trial would require a significant resource commitment (internal or external), the purchase of suitable technology and appropriate funding allocation.

**a. RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council:

- b. receives the information contained in Report No. 19-203 and Annex.
- c. agrees to discontinue live streaming (Option 1), **or**
- d. agrees to continue live streaming utilising option (select one)
  - i. Option 2. Zoom with existing cameras (status quo) Council meetings only, **or**
  - ii. Option 3. Zoom with existing cameras (status quo) all meetings, **or**
  - iii. Option 4. Zoom with existing cameras (status quo) all meetings (contractor assisted), **or**
  - iv. Option 5. Fully enhanced hardware owned and run by Horizons, **or**
  - v. Option 6. Fully enhanced hardware owned by Horizons and externally operated by contractor, **and**
- e. agrees to redirect relevant funding from the Governance budget (opex) and Infrastructure Technology budget (capex) for the remainder of the 2019/20 year, **and**
- f. directs the Chief Executive to make ongoing funding provisions in the 2020/21 Annual Plan.

**3. FINANCIAL IMPACT**

- 3.1. The cost of the short term trial (licencing and staff time) was funded from existing budgets.
- 3.2. There may be additional costs to Council dependent on the option agreed to (see Live Streaming Options below).
- 3.3. There are ongoing costs of \$600 per annum regardless of whether we continue to use Zoom to LiveStream to Facebook or switch to Vimeo streaming. Vimeo has the added advantage of streaming to multiple places (Horizons website, Facebook, YouTube) at the same time.

**4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

- 4.1. This is a public item and therefore Council may deem this sufficient to inform the public.

**5. SIGNIFICANT BUSINESS RISK IMPACT**

- 5.1. There are no significant business risks inherent in the adoption of recommendations contained in this report.

**6. BACKGROUND**

- 6.1. At its 14 May 2019 meeting, the Strategy & Policy Committee resolved that a six month trial be undertaken to review the use, costs and system improvements necessary for live streaming.
- 6.2. Since June 2019, \$50.00 has been allocated to boosting the Facebook event created to promote each Regional Council meeting.

6.3. Facebook statistics for live streamed Regional Council meetings from 25 June 2019 to 26 November 2019 are listed below:

Date Period	Shares	Likes	Average Watch Time	Reach	3 second Video views	10 second Video views	1 minute Video views
*25 June 19	3	13	1:16 min	2,341	831	402	151
27 Aug 19	6	37	0:48 sec	3,216	1,446	722	217
24 Sept 19	0	1	0:45 sec	1,107	413	179	50
22 Oct 19	7	19	1:27 min	3,672	1,434	618	239
5 Nov 19	2	9	1:11 min	1,368	482	189	84
26 Nov 19	3	10	0:38 sec	1,768	646	265	80

\* afternoon session not livestreamed due to technical issues.

6.4 Some meetings attracted comments, for the most part this was to tag others in. There was nothing substantial that warranted feedback from Horizons. The most comments were around viewing experience and that they would appreciate captions, which has been captured into this paper.

6.5 The videos later hosted on Horizons' website have had an additional number of views:

25 June 2019	150
27 August 2019	14
24 September 2019	13
22 October 2019	34
5 November 2019	19
26 November 2019	4

## 7. LIVE STREAMING OPTIONS

7.1 There are a number of options available to Council regarding live streaming. These options fall into three categories; cease live streaming, continue with live streaming of Council meetings, and commence live streaming of specified / all meetings. Displayed costs are indicative only. A breakdown of the main options are as follows;

- i. Discontinue live streaming
- ii. Zoom with existing cameras (status quo) Council meetings only
  - Technology
    - 1 rear camera (no movement)
    - No captions
    - Front screen presentations take priority over camera image
    - Stream limited to Facebook or YouTube
  - Meetings
    - Only council meetings (10 per year)
  - Cost
    - Staff time cost based on 3hr meetings - \$8,200/year

**Total cost - \$8,200/year**

- iii. Zoom with existing cameras (status quo) all meetings
  - Technology as per Option ii
  - Meetings
    - Council and committee meetings (46 per year)
  - Cost
    - Staff time cost based on 3hr meetings - \$37,720/year

**Total cost - \$37,720/year**
- iv. Zoom with existing cameras (status quo) all meetings (contractor assisted)
  - Technology as per Option ii
  - Meetings
    - Council and committee meetings (46 per year)
  - Cost
    - Staff time cost based on 3hr meetings - \$9,660/year
    - Contractor cost - \$500/meeting = \$23,000/year

**Total cost - \$32,660/year**
- v. Fully enhanced hardware owned and run by Horizons
  - Technology
    - 4 cameras with remote Pan Tilt & Zoom (PTZ) control, focus on individuals, see any part of the room
    - Captions (Current speaker, Agenda item, Meeting name, Time)
    - Independent remote access by Councillors/invited guests (Zoom)
    - Stream content is independent of front screen displays (i.e. no more Agendas full screen on stream for 10 minutes during discussions)
    - Stream to Vimeo, HRC website, YouTube and/or FaceBook
  - Meetings
    - Council committee meetings (46 per year)
  - Cost
    - Requires a dedicated part-time staff resource
    - Staff time cost based on 3hr meetings - \$50,140/year
    - One off hardware cost of approximately \$27,500 (including installation)

**Total cost - \$77,640 first year then \$50,140/year**
- vi. Fully enhanced hardware owned by Horizons and externally operated by contractor
  - Technology as per Option v
  - Meetings
    - Live stream council and committee meetings (46 per year)
  - Costs
    - Requires a dedicated part time staff resource
    - Staff time cost based on 3hr meetings - \$9,660/year
    - One off hardware cost of approximately - \$27,500 (including installation)
    - Contractor cost - \$750/meeting = \$34,500/year

**Total cost - \$71,660 first year then \$44,160/year**

## 8. TIMELINE / NEXT STEPS

- 8.1. If Council resolves to pursue continuation of live streaming utilising existing technology, then live streaming of meetings would continue from February 2020.
- 8.2. Should Council resolve to enhance its live streaming capability, then enhanced live streaming of meetings would commence from April 2020 (assuming funding allocation and technology availability). Live streaming between February and April could continue with Options ii or iii (Status Quo).

**9. SIGNIFICANCE**

- 9.1. This is not a significant decision according to the Council's Policy on Significance and Engagement.

Craig Grant

**GROUP MANAGER CORPORATE & GOVERNANCE**

**ANNEXES**

- A Example of Captions