

Information Briefing Session

17 July 2024

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) has considered the matters raised at the Public Meeting held 12 July 2024 as well as integrating feedback directed to the Mayor, CEO and Council, and concluded that there are five (5) options to consider.

The following is a summation of feedback received, assigned to the options of:

1. Do Nothing
2. Preserve
3. Relocate
4. Replicate
5. Future Thinking

A SWOT analysis has also been prepared to accompany each option, noting that this is not exhaustive, and that further input from other stakeholders, particularly Council Members, is required.

The intent of this document is to facilitate discussion by Council Members about the next steps, with the view to formalising said steps at a future Council meeting.

THE OPTIONS

(1) DO NOTHING

- Objection to spending money to save the Obelisk or rebuild a replica – it is not responsible use of ratepayer's funds
- No practical way to preserve – nature will take its course
- Paint current lighthouse with red and white stripes to represent the Obelisk
- The Obelisk sits on hard rock and the bay is sand, it will soon be an Island

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
• Cost Savings: Avoids immediate expenditure on preservation or relocation. • Natural Context: Maintains the Obelisk in its historical and natural environment. • Minimal Disruption: No need for physical changes that could impact the Obelisk's integrity.	• Cultural Loss: Risks losing a significant historical and cultural landmark. • Community Dissatisfaction: Could lead to dissatisfaction among locals and tourists who value the Obelisk.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
• Educational Opportunity: Could serve as a lesson in natural erosion processes and preservation challenges. • Focus Resources Elsewhere: Allows resources to be redirected to other community projects or priorities.	• Public Backlash: Potential backlash from community members and stakeholders who advocate for preservation. • Negative Tourism Impact: Could impact tourism if the iconic Obelisk deteriorates significantly. • Lost Economic Opportunity: Potential loss of tourism revenue associated with the Obelisk. • Marketing & Branding: Potential impact on branding as many businesses, community groups and Council use the Obelisk as part of a marketing campaign.

(2) **PRESERVE**

- There is huge energy for preserving and saving it where it stands
- Fishermen still use it to find their way home, it is very important to fishermen as it stands today
- Coast Protection Board dictates too much – it is still used as a landmark – first thing you look for when coming home from sea
- Reduce the wave erosion and stabilise the ground around the Obelisk that is at risk of failure
- Used crushed limestone and cement to form solid blocks which could be craned into the ocean to save the cliff

Option 2: Preserve

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
• Cultural Significance: Maintains the Obelisk in its original location, preserving its historical and cultural integrity. • Local Identity: Retains a significant landmark that defines Robe's identity. • Tourism and Economy: Continues to attract tourists and support local businesses.	• Erosion Risk: Continued erosion threatens the stability and integrity of the Obelisk. • Maintenance Costs: Requires ongoing investment in maintenance and preservation efforts. • Regulatory Compliance: Compliance with coastal protection regulations may pose challenges.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
• Community Engagement: Involves the community in preservation efforts, fostering local pride and ownership • Historical Education: Provides educational opportunities about local history and maritime heritage. • Partnerships: Collaboration with heritage organisations or government bodies for funding and support.	• Natural Deterioration: Risk of gradual deterioration despite preservation efforts. • Financial Constraints: Limited funding availability for ongoing maintenance and preservation. • Environmental Impact: Potential impact on the surrounding environment from preservation activities.

(3) **RELOCATE**

- 'Easily' done using a 600-tonne crane
- Significantly cheaper than building a replica
- Based on construction background, believe relocation can be done
- Should be moved and moved quickly, to save it
- Obelisk is the DNA of Robe
- It can be safely moved

Option 3: Relocate

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
• Preservation: Provides a solution to protect the Obelisk from erosion and potential collapse. • Cost Efficiency: Could be cheaper than building a replica, depending on relocation logistics. • Continued Functionality: Allows the Obelisk to continue serving as a historical landmark.	• Technical Challenges: Relocation may pose significant technical challenges, such as ensuring stability during and after the move. • Cost: Significant financial investment required for construction and maintenance. • Authenticity Concerns: Some may argue that moving the Obelisk compromises its historical integrity. • Community Opposition: Resistance from community members who prefer the Obelisk to remain in its original location.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
• Enhanced Preservation: Provides an opportunity to protect the Obelisk in a safer location. • Tourism, Education & Promotion: Could attract visitors interested in the relocation process and the history of the Obelisk. • Engineering Innovation: Showcases innovative engineering solutions for heritage preservation.	• Damage during Relocation: Risk of damage to the Obelisk during the relocation process. • Reputation: Risk of injury, accident and environment could result in reputational damage. • Environmental Impact: Potential environmental impact from construction and relocation activities. • Cost Overruns: Unforeseen costs associated with relocation logistics and site preparation.

(4) REPLICA

- Believe it is doomed, can't fight nature, don't believe it can be relocated
- Use modern precast material to build a replica
- The Obelisk is to what Robe the Sydney Harbour Bridge is to Sydney
- Building a replica is the best feasible outcome, but designed to clearly distinguish it from the original, maintaining integrity in interpreting the Obelisk's history and significance
- Not practical to reinforce cliffs or to relocate it – look at recreating it further back on the cliff, using original drawings to maintain same techniques and specifications
- Agree with Council to not spend funds preserving on existing site, should be rebuilt at an appropriate location in the future
- Build a replica from Cape Jaffa blocks – public could buy a block to help fund

Option 4: Build a Replica

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
• Preservation of Heritage: Ensures the preservation of the Obelisk's historical significance. • Tourism Potential: Creates a new attraction for tourists and visitors. • Community Satisfaction: Meets the desires of those who wish to maintain a visible symbol of Robe's history. • Access: would provide an opportunity for closer interaction.	• Authenticity Concerns: Potential perception issues regarding authenticity compared to the original. • Cost: Significant financial investment required for construction and maintenance. • Environmental Impact: Construction materials and ongoing maintenance could impact the environment.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
• Educational Tool: Provides an opportunity to educate visitors about the history and significance of the Obelisk. • Innovation: Opportunity to use modern construction techniques and materials to ensure longevity.	• Maintenance Costs: Long-term maintenance costs could be prohibitive. • Public Perception: Potential criticism from those who prefer the original Obelisk. • Space and Location: Finding an appropriate location for the replica that respects the historical context.

(5) FUTURE THINKING

- Form a committee to really think about future options and opportunities
- Create a world class tourism experience
- 3D / hologram / augmented reality
- MuseumNext (England)
- Illuminart
- National Trust SA collaboration
- State and National Maritime Museum
- It was functional – don't lose sight of its original purpose
- Obelisk has been a drawcard for Robe – do we want or need an icon that defines our town?
- Many things have come and gone, The 12 Apostles are still known as the 12 Apostles even though not all 12 are there
- It is our choice how we move forward and what it looks like – does it need to be bricks and mortar or could it be technology?
- There are many options, we need to go in with a positive mind and plan
- Many studies done, chunks of cliff falling away, it is a world-famous shoreline with unique geographical story that could be told
- There are many design options possible which would ensure the new Obelisk preserves and communicates its heritage values effectively
- Have a replica that can be open to go inside to view interpretive displays; we have plenty of time (20-30 years), let's get a masterplan done up now for a future project
- There are many other things that make Robe special. Build a replica and then deconstruct the original and commission local artists to make illustrations out of each piece that could be placed around town, making up a circuit trail that ends with new Obelisk

Option 5: Future Thinking (Technology Integration)

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
• Innovation: Incorporates modern technology (e.g., 3D, hologram, augmented reality) to preserve and showcase the Obelisk's history. • Educational Value: Enhances visitor experience with interactive and educational exhibits. • Flexibility: Allows for adaptation to future technological advancements.	• Authenticity Concerns: Some may argue that virtual or augmented representations lack the authenticity of a physical structure. • Technological Dependence: Relies on ongoing technological maintenance and updates. • Cost and Complexity: Initial investment and ongoing operational costs may be significant.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
• Enhanced Visitor Experience: Provides a unique and engaging way for visitors to interact with the Obelisk's history. • Accessibility: Can reach a broader audience beyond physical visitors to Robe. • Collaboration Opportunities: Potential partnerships with technology firms or educational institutions.	• Public Reception: Mixed reactions from traditionalists who prefer physical structures over virtual representations. • Technological Obsolescence: Risk of the technology becoming outdated over time. • Implementation Challenges: Requires expertise in both heritage preservation and technology integration.

GENERAL COMMENTS – NOT SPECIFIC TO THE ABOVE OPTIONS

This is a summary of points raised at either the Public Meeting, or by other channels, that are general in nature and not specifically related to any of the options presented above.

- Set budget over future years to cover costs
- Have a 'voluntary' separate rate on the rates notice
- Discretionary rate applied to rates, place money into an account a steering committee can use to negotiate with consultants
- Charge a \$5 or \$10 levy on all accommodation bookings in Robe – add funds into a Trust Fund account with Bendigo Bank with a caveat stating that Council is to only use the money for the new Obelisk and not for any other purpose
- Have a 'lottery' to guess when it will fall as a fundraising initiative
- We all have a responsibility for its future, and that responsibility needs to start now
- Need a plan
- Form a community committee – some suggested Council need not be involved, some suggested a local committee, another through inviting external people with relevant skills and experience would be a good idea
- Anything would be beyond Council's funding capacity, need external support
- Pulling it down to relocate would be a shame as we don't know how much longer it has
- Create an Obelisk budget line and start funding future plans
- Use volunteers – get the community to come together so Council doesn't have to do the work or engage outside providers when Council has all the skills in-house to manage the project
- Undertake a comprehensive 3D photogrammetric survey of the Obelisk in situ – an activity that could be safely performed via drone

Disclaimer: this document is not exhaustive, and requires further input from other stakeholders, particularly Council Members.

Nat Traeger

Chief Executive Officer

17 July 2024