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## NATURAL ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING REPORT

**ATTENDANCE:** Lisa Kermode, Stuart Holley, Helen Paulsen, Bruce Miles, Joan Fitzsimmons, Cr Allison Jones

**APOLOGIES:** Cr Julie Boyd, Colin Creighton

### **1. REVIEW OF PREVIOUS MINUTES - MATTERS ARISING**

1. Environmental Projects process:

Council has endorsed the Environmental Projects Process, subject to the finalisation of the proposed five-year budget. The five-year budget will be considered at the October Infrastructure Services Committee meeting.

Clarification of July meeting minutes:

It is proposed to allocate a maximum of \$50,000 annually for special projects under \$3000 to be determined by Council's Environmental Officers.

It is proposed to allocate a maximum of \$50,000 annually for environmental projects between \$3,000 and \$15,000, which will be considered by the NEAC, and referred to Council for approval

2. Plants distribution proposal:

This item will be deferred to the next meeting, as Stuart Fyfe was not in attendance.

3. Significant tree register update

Progress with the significant tree register was discussed. Due to current work commitments, progress with condition assessments for the trees on the draft list is ongoing but slow.

The committee requested that the process for considering trees for the significant tree register be finalised and that the finalised procedure be tabled at the next meeting.

**Action:** Helen Paulsen and Lisa Kermode (in consultation with Council's Arborist - Glenn Comrie) to prepare a report on the significant tree register for consideration at the next committee meeting and refer to council for approval. This report is to advise of the process to be followed for the gathering of data and listing of significant trees within the Mackay region.

**Action:** Lisa Kermode to email the draft list of trees to committee members.

4. Action items:

**Action:** Lisa Kermode to update the action list and attach it to the meeting minutes. Action list to be discussed at each meeting.

5. Land acquisition at the Gooseponds:

This item is ongoing with Stuart Holley involved in discussions with the land holder.

6. Reliance Creek:

Stuart Holley has written to the Department of Natural Resources and Water advising that Council has resolved to give in principle support to the concept of designating the existing Unallocated State Land along Reliance Creek as a reserve. Council is awaiting a response from the Department about how this proposal could be progressed. Further discussion about proposed trustee arrangements is anticipated.

7. McReady's Creek Reserve:

Questions were asked relating to the reserve designation and trustee arrangements for McReady's Creek Reserve.

**Action:** Lisa Kermode to check with the Department of Natural Resources and Water about the designation of the Reserve.

2. **BUDGET UPDATE AND 5 YEAR BUDGET – BUDGETS TO BE TABLED AT MEETING**

The current budget report and the proposed 5 year budget were discussed. In its current form the five year budget does not balance, but it is anticipated that it will balance with minor adjustments, taking into account any carry forwards and expected income increases. Capital works and special projects to be combined into one category called special projects. It was identified that approximately 40% of the levy income (not including the 20% set aside for land acquisition) is allocated for stormwater related items (\$120k for staff costs and \$120k for stormwater plan implementation). It was identified that there is a strategic need to shift some of this cost long term.

When discussing the allocation of funds to signage projects, it was identified that as well as the proposed interpretive signage, some form of signage should be erected on key sites to identify works undertaken as part of the environment levy. These signs could be temporary corflute signs, or plaques set in stone etc.

**Action:** Stuart Holley to identify opportunities to reduce the proportion of levy funds allocated to stormwater related items over the next 3 years, through grant opportunities, funding from other department operational budgets etc.

**Action:** Consideration be given to including signage on major project sites.

**Action:** NEAC members to submit any additional comments on the proposed 5 year budget to Lisa Kermode by Wednesday 22nd August, to allow finalisation of the budget for consideration at the October Infrastructure Services Committee meeting.

**Action:** NEAC to review five-year budget annually.

### 3. UPDATE ON STORMWATER PROJECTS

An update on stormwater projects was given by Robyn Birkett and Daniel Radovic.

1. Environmental Infrastructure research project (\$160,000 total). Verbally received a grant from the State and Federal Governments for half of the project costs. Council will fund the remaining \$80,000. \$50,000 has already been allocated and \$30,000 will come from Planning and Environment budgets.
2. Automatic water sampler has been installed in Macalister Street.
3. Waterway health monitoring project is ongoing
4. Gooseponds Catchment Management Plan. Work is ongoing with development of this plan. A second community meeting was held recently. Aiming to have a draft available for community comment by the end of the year
5. Stormwater quality management meeting was held last month.
6. Butt littering campaign is ongoing in terms of investigating processes and on ground implementation. It is hoped that the education officer can allocate one day per week to education and awareness raising on this matter.

**Action:** Lisa Kermode to forward Joan Fitzsimmons' email details to Daniel Radovic, to pass on copies of newspaper articles on the Gooseponds tabled at the recent community meeting.

### 4. COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Despite recent assurances from the consultant, the coastal management plan was not ready for this meeting.

**Action:** Lisa Kermode to distribute the text of the draft report to committee members for review at the next meeting.

### 5. OTHER BUSINESS

1. Weed eradication - Dalbergia sissoo (Penny leaf):

Joan Fitzsimmons provided background information on this weed species and asked what can Council do to eradicate these weed, particularly from our road verges and council owned properties?

**Action:** Lisa Kermode to investigate funding opportunities for a wider project of Penny leaf control.

2. Broad-leaf Pepper Tree Control - Slade Point:

Cr Jones questioned whether the Broad-leaf Pepper Tree control project referred to in the July minutes was in Slade Point Reserve as she had not been contacted about it. Lisa explained that the grant application submitted by Pioneer Catchment and Landcare was for work in the Reserve.

**Action:** Lisa Kermode contact the grant submitters and provide details of the proposed location to Cr Jones.

3. Parcels of Land:

Joan Fitzsimmons asked about small parcels of land that council owns that contain endangered vegetation communities, and is there any assurance that this vegetation is protected from development.

**Action:** Lisa Kermode to find out about the current restrictions that apply (to council owned and freehold land). Discussion at the next meeting about whether they need to be strengthened and the best method for doing this.

4. Tidal Plan

The Tidal plan for the Gooseponds will be discussed further at the next meeting. Joan asked whether the dogs of lead area identified in the report had been set up, and the offsets referred to have been made.

**Action:** Lisa Kermode to list this as an item on the next agenda.

**Action:** Lisa Kermode to bring copies of Council's existing pest plant strategy to the next meeting.

Meeting closed: 10.45am

Note: The remaining committee members expressed concern that the meeting was cut short due to the prior commitments of some committee members. It was suggested that if this is going to be a regular occurrence, consideration be given to rescheduling the meeting. It was decided to suggest to the committee that meetings commence at 8.30am instead of 9.00am.

**Action:** Lisa Kermode to ask committee members whether the committee meetings need to be rescheduled or started earlier

**NEXT MEETING**

Next meeting to be held Thursday October 18<sup>th</sup>

**Action:** Lisa Kermode to make a regular booking for committee meetings in Council Chambers

**RECORDED BY:** Lisa Kermode