

Plants are currently being produced for Land for Wildlife orders.

3. Landcare Group support projects

As per reports in the agenda.

PCL reported that they currently have approximately 5000 seedlings and that some lids were blown away in the cyclone and a cupboard was blown over. PCL to request a cupboard and any other items required as per the standard arrangements in the MOU between MRC and PCL.

SLCMA reported that there was no damage to the Sarina nursery in the cyclone and a watering system donated by Dowdens is currently being installed.

4. Special projects updates

A report was provided on the Sarina Community Native Garden Project.

Additional items reported include that there were some eucalypt trees lost in the cyclone. Kym mentioned that volunteers would be removing them with a chainsaw shortly, however, as this is a high risk activity, MRC considers it inappropriate for volunteers to undertake this task. Kym to liaise with Lisa about appropriately qualified council staff undertaking this task.

4. FINANCIALS

Reports were noted.

Kym raised the feral pig management plan for Sarina as a potential project for Management Plan funding. Current allocations from the Management Plan budget include NEP website hosting and Demoleyns Lagoon Management Plan.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

1. The committee discussed the promotion of the Natural Environment Levy in general and the possibility of developing a communications strategy. Promotion of the Community Environmental Grants in particular was discussed (February round closes Friday 7th February). Cr Jones and Lisa have previously met with Corporate Communications to discuss promotion of the grants, which has resulted in more widespread promotion.

2. The committee discussed the reserve balance and potential additional projects.

Possibilities discussed included:

- Additional funding allocation to the Land Acquisition Fund, however 20% of the levy funds are already set aside for this purpose, there is currently no specific land purchase under consideration and the committee is keen to explore other opportunities to protect land such as conservation covenants etc.

- Education Officer – this role is already undertaken by existing staff, and in addition, council currently funds PCL and SLCMA through the NEL to work with schools

- Consulting with landcare groups about potential projects, however landcare groups (and other environmental groups) have the opportunity to put forward projects including via the Community Environment Grants program and a comprehensive prioritisation system has been developed as part of the Natural Environment Plan, which is the key tool to guide decision making. PCL mentioned that taking on further small projects may be difficult due to time limitations and reporting requirements. It was noted that there is already a community consultation process underway regarding council expenditure that is being overseen by the CEO which will provide information on community priorities.

- Keeping a set percentage (e.g. 15%) in the reserve as a float or buffer in case of over or unexpected expenditure.

- Utilising additional funds to undertake additional projects as per the prioritisation system

- Employment of a nursery coordinator

3. Presentation on Natural Environment Priority Projects for 2014/15.

Kerri Woodcock gave an overview of the NEP and the prioritisation system and presented a range of projects under the key landscape areas of coasts, waterways, ranges and plains.

Recommendation: That \$750,000 be allocated to NEP priority projects for 2014/15 (including \$100,000 previously allocated to sustainability projects).

Action: The final list of the projects that can be achieved with the \$750,000 allocated will be presented to the committee at the April meeting. This will take into account project management options, revised pricing and potential additional funding availability.

Action: The priority project listing and PowerPoint presentation will be circulated to the committee.

Meeting closed 2.40 pm

Next meeting: Tuesday 1st April - Council Chambers 12.30-2.30pm

6. UPDATED ACTION LIST

Action: The final list of the projects that can be achieved with the \$750,000 allocated will be presented to the committee at the April meeting. This will take into account project management options, revised pricing and potential additional funding availability.

Action: The priority project listing and PowerPoint presentation will be circulated to the committee.