

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday 29th August 2012 – 10.00AM – 12.00 noon

Council Chambers

**ATTENDANCE:** Cr Morgan (chair), Cr Jones  
Lisa Kermode, Stuart Holley (via telephone), Peter Cluff  
Bruce Milles, Joan Fitzsimmons  
Saskia von Fahland, Margaret Lane, Di Williams, Peter  
Alden, Rod Hall (proxy for Rob Cocco)  
Presenters Jessica Renton (MRC), Kerri Woodcock (Reef  
Catchments)

**APOLOGIES:** Julie Cowley (MRC Finance),

**WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS**

The chair welcomed and introduced the new committee members (including Di Williams, Peter Alden, Cr Jones, Cr Morgan and Rod Hall who attended as Rob Cocco's proxy).

1. **CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES**

The minutes of the previous meeting held 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2012 were accepted as a true and correct record (moved Lisa Kermode, seconded Margaret Lane).

2. **MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

1. **Environmental Ranger**

Jessica Renton, Council's Environmental Ranger attended the meeting and gave an overview of her role and current activities.

Some discussion points included:

- Identification signage is required for the Environmental Ranger's vehicle.
- Issue of penalty units for infringements being set by the state government. Council may pursue the issue of increasing penalty units. Cr Morgan, Jessica Renton, Stuart Holley and Peter Cluff to discuss this with local laws staff and report back to the committee.
- The committee is keen to see media coverage to raise awareness about penalties and reduce infringements.
- The committee is keen to resource and support the Environmental Ranger including purchasing as many surveillance cameras as required.

The committee thanked Jessica for her presentation.

**Action:** Cr Morgan, Jessica Renton, Stuart Holley and Peter Cluff to discuss the potential to increase penalty units (particularly for vegetation clearing) with local laws staff and report back to the committee

## **2. Sustainable Futures Committee**

Hailey Bolland has been asked to present an update on her work at the October meeting (and every second meeting after that).

## **3. Signage at the Bluewater trail**

Margaret Lane and Lisa have met to discuss the potential content and placement of interpretive signs and this project will be undertaken this financial year.

Cr Jones asked what the 'generic' signage was and Lisa described the mangrove signage that DPI and F had produced, and outlined the reasons for wanting more specific interpretive signage that refers to the plants, animals and history of the Pioneer River and Bluewater Trail, and is consistent with the existing signage in Sandfly Creek Environmental Reserve. This project will be funded from the interpretive signage/brochure development allocation in the Natural Environment Levy.

## **4. Community Grants**

Cr Jones asked whether the recommendation for item 5 in the April 2012 minutes had been undertaken. Lisa advised that Council had approved the two grant allocations to SLCMA and the projects had been funded and the contracts signed. The projects will be completed in the 2012/13 financial year.

## **5. Significant Tree Study**

Cr Jones commented that it was good to see that the Significant Tree Study was progressing (Action under item 4 Financials in the April 2012 minutes). Note that an update on this project was provided in the agenda for this meeting.

## **6. Action list**

Cr Jones commented that many items on the action list have been progressed and she hopes to see the rest of the items progressed in time.

## **3. GENERAL BUSINESS**

### **1. Coasts and Communities project/coastal activities update**

A detailed report on this item was received.

**Action:** Include mention of SLCMA as a project partner for the delivery of the coastal project in Sarina.

## 2. Land for Wildlife Program

A detailed report on this item was received.

No further comments were made.

## 3. Sarina and Mirani Special Projects allocation

Detailed reports on this item were received.

New agreements for 2012/13 are in development.

## 4. Update on the Natural Environment Plan

An update on the Natural Environment Plan (NEP) was provided by Kerri Woodcock from Reef Catchments.

Key discussion points included:

- Index vs. page width  
**Action:** Kerri to enquire how individuals can display the whole screen rather than having the index on the side.
- The NEP is an online book which can be constantly be updated. The committee recognised the importance of ensuring the website is regularly updated. The web hosting/updating costs for the first year have been included in the levy budget.
- Is there a feedback mechanism for the public e.g. a contacts page.  
**Action:** Kerri to add wording regarding key contacts.
- A launch/media release will be undertaken once council approve the release of the plan.
- The plan is quite different to the first Natural Environment Plan and should be very user friendly, with the ability for the community to contribute.
- It is important that the planning officers know of the existence of the plan, including significant environmental areas.

**Action:** Councillors to discuss with Stuart Holley and investigate how the plan could inform development and report back to the committee.

## 5. Community Environmental Grants

No applications were received for the August 2012 round.

The next round will be held in February 2013.

## 6. MRPMG representation on the NEAC

The committee noted that the Terms of Reference had been reviewed to allow Peter Alden from the Mackay Regional Pest Management Group (MRPMG) to join the committee.

## 7. Update on the Midge Point SEMP

The committee received an update on this item.

No further comments were made.

## 8. Significant tree register

The committee received an update on this item.

No further comments were made.

## 9. Application for funding from NEL

The committee received an application from PCL for funding support in excess of the agreed \$30,000 to enable them to work with community groups to undertake revegetation and rehabilitation.

**Motion:** That NEAC give 'in principle' support to funding this project, but defer a decision until next meeting so that SLCMA can also be included in funding discussions.

Moved Bruce Milles, Seconded Rod Hall

**Action:** Stuart, Peter, Lisa and Cr Morgan to meet with both PCL and SLCMA to discuss potential funding arrangements beyond the agreed \$30,000 budget.

## 10. Local Weed Declarations

The committee received a report on this item

Motion: That the NEAC recommend that council declare the five weed species proposed in the report

Moved Margaret Lane, Seconded Cr Jones

**Action:** Cr Morgan to speak to Peter Alden about this further prior to presenting these minutes to council for consideration.

## **11. Fishways**

Tim Marsden from Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries is to be invited to make a presentation on fishways to the committee at some stage. All Councillors to be invited to attend.

## **4. FINANCIALS**

The financials up until end of July were circulated and discussed.

There are currently three Natural Environment Levy-funded positions vacant including the Natural Environment Officer and the Habitat Restoration Leading Hand and Labourer's positions.

The newly created Natural Environment Supervisor position has been filled.

A question was raised regarding how many positions are funded through the levy: Natural Environment Coordinator (50%), Natural Environment Officer, Natural Environment Supervisor, Environmental Ranger, Habitat Restoration Team Leading Hand and Labourer. It has been important to get these positions to enable on ground works to be undertaken, and projects involving contractors and community managed.

Individual project numbers have been set up under management plan implementation for the priority projects identified in the Natural Environment Plan under the headings of Coasts, Waterways, Plains and Ranges.

Washdown planning – this funding is to research the potential location and types of washdown facilities required in the region to prevent weed spread and protect natural areas. It is anticipated that based on the recommendations from this research, the committee will consider funding the installation of a facility within the region next year.

Pest information database – this project is to establish a system for council staff to record and monitor natural environment activities and pest species found and treated. Peter Alden mentioned a 'pest central' system that council's can buy into.

**Action:** Lisa will include the full list and descriptions of the Natural Environment Plan priority projects funded in 2012/13 with the minutes.

## **5. OTHER BUSINESS**

### **1. Purchase of Blacks Beach Spit**

The committee congratulated council on the purchase of the Blacks Beach Spit land and recognised the importance of implementing the management plan for the site once this has been prepared. Work is currently underway to fence vehicle access points to stop ongoing land degradation caused by vehicles and waste dumping. The committee was supportive of restricting access to pedestrians and management vehicles. The committee will be kept informed of progress at this site.

### **2. Pest Proposal**

This item was tabled in June 2011 meeting and remains with the committee for possible consideration as part of future budget planning.

### **3. Resignation of PCL representative**

Margaret Lane resigned as the PCL representative with Di Williams taking over the position from next meeting. The committee thanked Margaret for her representation on the committee.

### **4. Meeting dates for the rest of the year**

**Action:** Cr Morgan and Lisa will discuss potential meeting dates for the remainder of the year and send out invitations

Meeting closed 12.40 pm

Next meeting: to be advised

## 6. UPDATED ACTION LIST

### **Actions arising from this meeting**

**Action:** Cr Morgan, Jessica Renton, Stuart Holley and Peter Cluff to discuss the potential to increase penalty units (particularly for vegetation clearing) with local laws staff and report back to the committee

**Action:** Include mention of SLCMA as a project partner for the delivery of the coastal project in Sarina.

**Action:** Kerri to enquire how individuals can display the whole screen rather than having the index on the side (for the NEP).

**Action:** Kerri to add wording regarding key contacts (on the NEP website).

**Action:** Councillors to discuss with Stuart Holley and investigate how the Natural Environment Plan could inform development and report back to the committee.

**Action:** Stuart, Peter, Lisa and Cr Morgan to meet with both PCL and SLCMA to discuss potential funding arrangements beyond the agreed \$30,000 budget.

**Action:** Cr Morgan to speak to Peter Alden about the process for weed declaration further prior to presenting these minutes to council for consideration.

**Action:** Lisa will include the full list and descriptions of the Natural Environment Plan priority projects funded in 2012/13 with the minutes.

**Action:** Cr Morgan and Lisa will discuss potential meeting dates for the remainder of the year and send out invitations

### **Actions arising from previous meetings**

**Action:** Lisa to make the suggested changes to the Environment Levy brochure and present back to the committee for further comment.

*In progress*

**Action:** Committee to consider the Pest Management proposal at the August meeting.  
*To be considered by the committee*