

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday 3rd December 2013 – 12.30 – 2.30 PM

Council Chambers

<u>ATTENDANCE:</u>	<i>Councillors:</i>	Cr Morgan, (chair)
	<i>Council staff:</i>	Lisa Kermode, Peter Cluff, Gerard Carlyon
	<i>Group reps:</i>	Rod McFadzen, Kerri Woodcock, Kate Steel, Christine Petersen
	<i>Community reps:</i>	Bruce Milles
<u>APOLOGIES:</u>	Cr Jones, Joan Fitzsimmons, Di Williams (Kate Steel as proxy)	

1. **CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES**

The minutes of the previous meeting held 2nd October 2013 were accepted as a true and correct record.

Moved – Lisa

Seconded – Kerri

2. **MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

The following items were reported:

ACTION: Catchment groups to meet with Natural Environment Coordinator to discuss re-funding the Landcare Support Projects.

Completed (contracts issued)

ACTION: Catchment groups to meet with Natural Environment Coordinator to discuss re-funding the Land for Wildlife Program.

Completed (contracts issued)

ACTION: Cr Morgan to raise at next Councillor forum the issue of state penalty unit increase for offences relating to vegetation clearing, with a view for a motion to be put to the LGAQ annual conference in October.

Recommendation: That Council pursue increasing the penalty for vegetation clearing from 20 to 50 penalty units

That Council recommend to LGAQ that the penalty for vegetation clearing be increased at the State level.

3. PRESENTATIONS

The committee received presentations on the following:

- Update on the MNEC redevelopment project – Richard Brown
- Update on the Eungella Biodiversity Research Project – Richard Brown
- Update on the Environmental Ranger’s activities and enforcement projects – Jenni Bailey

4. GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Coasts and Communities project/coastal activities update

The committee received a detailed report on this item.

Kerri Woodcock presented a brief overview of the Coasts and Communities activities and achievements for 2013, including:

- 15 organisations working together to deliver integrated coastal management in the Mackay region
- 19 Coastcare activities held across 7 beaches to provide opportunities for local residents to care for our coast
- 144 beach access tracks maintained to ensure safe public access to the beach
- 9 Council staff working on-ground committing resources to protecting our coastal environment
- 168 hectares of coastal environments cleared of invasive weeds to promote native rehabilitation across an area the size of 247 football fields
- 5312 native seedlings planted to improve the condition of the coastal environment, replace removed weed species, stabilise dune systems and provide habitat for native animals such as marine turtles and shorebirds
- 12 tonnes of rubbish and marine debris removed from our beaches and coastal reserves to prevent rubbish from ending up in our waterways and oceans
- 106 volunteers attended Coastcare activities to make our beaches better
- 6 Council and Reef Catchments staff working in coastal management in planning, compliance, community engagement, monitoring and managing external contractors on our coast

- 770m of coastal fencing installed to protect dune rehabilitation areas and define pedestrian access tracks to protect Nationally threatened coastal vegetation
- 2 new beach plans developed for Blacks Beach Spit, and Town and Far Beach to protect and restore the natural environment values of the coast.

2. Land for Wildlife Program

The committee received the final report on this project for the 2013 contract.

3. Landcare Group support projects

Reports from PCL and SLCMA received.

4. Special projects updates

A report was provided on the Sarina Community Native Garden Project

5. African Tulip Tree Project

Recommendation: That an extension be given for SLCMA to complete this project by June 2014 to allow for further monitoring and follow up controls

6. Weeds of the Mackay Whitsunday Region

Christine Peterson from MWRPMG spoke on the new book being produced.

Recommendation: That \$4000 be allocated from the 'brochure development' account to contribute towards printing costs.

5. FINANCIALS

Reports were noted.

Bruce Milles proposed holding a workshop in February 2014 to discuss ideas for reducing the currently unallocated funding in the reserve. It was noted that officers can propose additional projects through the prioritisation system, but that capacity to deliver additional projects is limited. It is also possible to undertake community engagement about what the community would like to see as part of the work being done on the sustainability strategy – although this would need to align with the guidelines for use of levy funding.

The 2014/15 budget will be discussed at the February 2014 meeting.

An additional meeting is proposed for February 2014 to workshop ideas for additional projects.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

1. Kate asked about the local weed declaration

Action: Lisa to ask Stuart Holley and report back at the February meeting

2. Kate raised the recent clearing of vegetation at the Gooseponds and said there was community concern about this. Gerard reported that there had been complaints from the community about loitering in this area and the vegetation was constantly growing over the paths creating a difficult maintenance situation. There had been letter drops in the area advising that the vegetation would be removed and outlining the reasons. The area has since been replanted with less high maintenance species as was always the intention. Gerard proposed that if council were to undertake similar work in the future, more media/promotion may be required.

Meeting closed 2.40 pm

Next meeting: Tuesday 4th February - Council Chambers 12.30-2.30pm

7. UPDATED ACTION LIST

Actions arising from this meeting

Action: Natural Environment Coordinator to follow up with Stuart Holley about the status of the Local Weed Declaration and report back at the February meeting

Actions arising from previous meetings

Action: Natural Environment Coordinator to investigate purchasing process and arrange appropriate works regarding Slade Point Reserve and funds from the former Friends Group. In progress