

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday 4th August 2009 – 12.00PM – 2.00PM

COUNCIL CHAMBERS

ATTENDANCE: Lisa Kermode, Helen Paulsen
Cr. May, Cr. Steindl, Cr. Cameron
Bruce Milles, Joan Fitzsimmons
Margaret Lane, Frank Perna, Saskia von Fahland

APOLOGIES: Lyn Stevens, Stuart Holley

1. **CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES**

The minutes of the previous meeting held 02/06/09 were accepted as a true and correct record.

2. **MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

1. **Review of the Natural Environment Plan**

Derek Ball presented a detailed proposal on the proposed review of the Natural Environment Plan. Detailed costings were provided based on a State of the Environment Report format focusing on 6 asset areas, an ongoing budget amount for maintaining the work management system and the production of a web-based publication, plus an annual amount for hosting.

Action: That Reef Catchments be engaged to deliver the State of the Environment Report in the format presented to the committee and that funds be allocated from the levy to produce the report. Subject to clarification regarding IT compatibility issues, the committee recommends the web-based reporting system be implemented and funds be allocated from the levy for this purpose.

Action: Lisa to discuss details with Reef Catchments and finalise arrangements.

2. **Significant Tree Study**

A meeting of the subgroup was held. Lisa is currently working on a more detailed proposal for implementing this project. Lisa will also prepare a

project brief and a report seeking Council's approval to advertise for a consultant to undertake this work. NEAC will be advised of likely costs when this is known. It is important that species known to be weedy are only included on the register if there are good reasons for their inclusion.

Action: Lisa will prepare a project brief and a report seeking Council's approval to advertise for a consultant to be engaged to develop a significant tree register.

3. Midge Point Shoreline Erosion Management Plan funding application

A letter was received on 27/07/09 stating, as announced in the State budget, no more funds will be allocated to the production of shoreline erosion management plans, and as such, our funding application was not successful. Lisa will contact the relevant officer and determine whether there are any other possible funding sources. Lisa will contact the Midge Point Progress Association when this information is available and advise them of other funding possibilities. Council has contacted the local member Jan Jarrat who was not aware that this funding is no longer available, and has agreed to look into this matter.

Action: Lisa will contact the State Government to discuss possible options for funding and will advise the Midge Point Progress Association.

4. Draft Natural Environment Levy Brochure

Lisa is updating the brochure to include more specific details about projects that have been funded in the past.

Action: Lisa to update and circulate the draft brochure when available.

5. Gooseponds Tidal reaches masterplan

The sub-committee for this project has met to discuss this item. Lisa will determine whether the school has undertaken the projects it proposed and whether the changes to the land titles proposed have been undertaken and will advise if any work is required. Lisa will also advise what the priorities are for implementing the recommendations proposed in the report. Lisa will report back to the committee.

Action: Lisa to report back to the committee regarding compliance issues and possible recommendations for implementing elements of the plan.

6. Slade Point Andergrove (Keeley's Rd) wetland project.

The sub-committee for this project has met to discuss this item. Lisa will develop a project proposal to identify future works required at the Keeley's rd sites and options for continuing to expand this project. Lisa will report back to the committee.

Action: Lisa will develop a project proposal for the Slade Point/Andergrove wetlands for consideration by the committee.

7. Sandfly Creek Environmental Reserve Management Plan

There is a councillor briefing scheduled for 12th August to seek councillor approval to release the draft management plan for community consultation. It is anticipated that the plan will be finished by the next meeting date. Funding allocation for the implementation of the recommendations of the management plan will be added as an agenda item for the October meeting.

Action: Committee to consider allocating funding for the implementation of the Sandfly Creek Environmental Reserve Management Plan at the October meeting.

8. Land for Wildlife

The committee agreed to recommend council facilitate the Land for Wildlife program at its July 2007 meeting, following an initial proposal put to the committee by Joan Fitzsimmons in February 2007. It was agreed to allocate funds to this project on an annual basis in line with the 10-year plan for the committee. Consultant Peter Alden agreed to undertake the land for wildlife assessments for a fee of \$500 per assessment, and undertake additional extension work required by negotiation.

Between January and June 2008 - \$3500 was allocated, and 7 assessments were undertaken. In the 2008/2009 financial year, \$12,000 was allocated to the program. Assessments and activities totalling \$6000 have been conducted (or are in preparation).

The program has been promoted through media articles, provision of information at community events such as Landcare Day at the Gardens, information on council website, organised media opportunities etc. This promotion is undertaken on an ongoing basis.

Action: Lisa to investigate mapping the location of Land for Wildlife properties (potentially as part of the web-based State of the

Environment Report). If possible include all properties registered since the program commenced.

Action: Lisa to liaise with catchment groups and Peter Alden about follow up / extension activities such as newsletters, field trips, reassessments, updating database of registered properties, survey of what help could be provided etc.

Action: Lisa to include LAW as a regular item on the agenda.

9. Dog free and off lead areas

Confirmation is given that this topic will be included in the scope of works for the review of the Open Space Plan/Recreation Strategy.

10. Schools Program

The schools program is linked to key strategic priority of Environmental Sustainability identified in MRC's Corporate Plan. Specific strategies relevant to the program include:

- In partnership with the community and external agencies, promote and support the preservation and enhancement of the natural environment
- Encourage environmental awareness by promoting activities and practices that support preservation of the region's natural environment

The Parks and Environment Operational Plan includes the following:

- Development of community partnerships to encourage higher awareness and understanding in the community and encourage active participation in conserving natural resources.
- This is to be achieved through the delivery of education programs to the community to enhance community knowledge of natural environment issues and encourage participation in managing the natural environment.

An operational plan for the Natural Environment Section of the Parks and Environment Program is currently in development. Objective 2 of the draft plan is to:

- 'develop and maintain partnerships between Council and the community which promote sustainable environmental management and increase awareness and understanding of environmental issues.

Actions to achieve this include:

- Provide opportunities for community members to participate in sustainable management of public land
- Provide opportunities for school groups to learn about the natural environment and participate in sustainable land and biodiversity management activities
- Involve the community in action-based events such as National Tree Day

Currently the Natural Environment Officer (Stuart Fyfe) is actively working with Beaconsfield State School and Andergrove State School. Additional projects are currently being developed with other schools.

National tree day projects are being undertaken by the NEO and bush with the following schools:

29th July - Beaconsfield State Primary School 6/7 students - Blacks Beach Spit

31st July - Andergrove State Primary School - Morag McNichol Reserve

31st July - Andergrove State Primary School - Wetland Walk-about

31st July - Beaconsfield State Primary School (entire school) - Future Forest Beaconsfield Reserve

31st July - North Primary - North Primary

31st July - North View State Primary School - North View State Primary School

31st July - Bloomsbury State Primary School - Bloomsbury State Primary School

31st July - Alligator Creek School - Alligator Creek School

There are also links to the schools program in the Reef Guardian Council program action plan. This program is run by GBRMPA and Council has recently been made a Reef Guardian Council. Working with Reef Guardian Schools, in particular, to undertake activities which contribute to the improvement of the health of the reef is identified as a priority in the plan.

3. STORMWATER PROJECTS UPDATE

A written update was provided by the Stormwater Officers.

Action: Stormwater Officers to be asked to present an update of their programs to NEAC twice per year, with the committee to email Lisa any specific questions that they would like the Stormwater Officers to present in their report. Written updates to continue to be provided at each NEAC meeting.

4. FINANCIALS

Helen presented the revised budget spreadsheet.

Action: Helen to include a ‘total funds’ column to make the spreadsheet totals easier to read.

Action: Lisa to circulate a list of existing management plans to enable consideration to be given to priorities for implementation.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

1. Coastal Project

Community consultation regarding the site specific beach management plans is currently in progress.

Beach BBQ’s will be held as follows:

Saturday 15th August

Shoal point	Shoal Point Park	9-11am
Bucasia Beach	Seaview Park	11.30-1.30pm
Blacks Beach	Blacks Beach Park	2-4pm

Saturday 5th September

Eimeo	Eimeo Esplanade	9-10am
Midge Point	Nielsen Pde Shelter	12-130pm

Saturday 12th September

Seaforth	Esplanade Reserve	9.30-11am
Ball Bay	picnic and camp area	11.30-1.00pm
Haliday Bay	picnic area	1.30-2.30pm

Plans for all 8 beaches will be available from council’s website and in hard copy from customer service centres and libraries.

Action: Lisa to include a brief update on the progress of the Coastal Project at each meeting.

2. Brochures

A series of brochures produced by Whitsunday Regional Council relating to biodiversity and the Council’s Biodiversity Levy were tabled by Margaret.

3. Sarina Community Native Gardens Project.

Saskia briefly mentioned the Sarina Community Native Gardens Project, which could possibly be part funded through the levy funds set aside for ‘Sarina projects’.

Action: Saskia to provide further details for Lisa to circulate prior to the next meeting. The committee will consider funding this project at the October meeting

4. Land Acquisition

Action: Cr May to report back to the committee regarding potential acquisition of land at the next meeting.

Meeting closed at 2.25 pm.

Next meeting October 6th 12-2pm Council Chambers