

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

ATTENDANCE: Lisa Kermode, Helen Paulsen, Stuart Holley, Cr. May, Cr. Cameron.

APOLOGIES:

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

1. **Possible review of the Natural Environment Plan.**

The previous minutes (December 2007) stated that NEAC were to formulate a brief for the possible review of the Natural Environment Plan. This has not been completed, as the group has not met since December.

Action: Lisa Kermode to set up a meeting with Derek Ball (MWNRM – now Reef Catchments), to develop a scoping document and progress this matter further. Costs and possible funding opportunities will also be investigated.

2. **Gooseponds tidal reaches masterplan**

Action: Stuart Holley to investigate future land purchase in the tidal sections of the Gooseponds catchment.

3. **Reliance Creek**

Further to report given at last meeting, a letter has been received from Department of Natural Resources and Water indicating that they are not prepared at this stage to become a joint trustee in any proposed Reliance Creek Reserve, and unless Council becomes sole trustee or joint trustee with another suitable entity, the land will remain unallocated.

Action: Stuart Holley to write to DNR&W advising that Council is not prepared to accept sole trusteeship at this time, and to EcoNorth advising them of the situation.

4. **Slade Point Reserve Project**

The two accesses into the Reserve have been constructed. The seat installation and landscaping works are in progress.

Action: Stuart Fyfe to ensure the remaining works are completed as soon as possible so the remaining funds can be reallocated.

5. **Bringing back the beach scrub projects**

The three projects funded in January 2008 have now been completed. Funding was provided by the Australian Government and the project was facilitated by the Mackay Whitsunday Natural Resource Management Group.

- \$8460 was provided for weed control and a community working bee at Blacks Beach, where 400 plants were planted, and over 35 volunteers attended
- \$5515 was provided for strategic fencing to protect vegetation and weed control at Slade Point Reserve
- \$20161 was provided for strategic fencing and weed control at Shoal point foreshore
- due to another project in the region being cancelled, an additional \$3000 was provided to extend the Shoal Point fencing (completed) and \$3500 was provided to undertake revegetation. Plants have been ordered for this and it is anticipated that the work will be undertaken in October 2008.
- Interpretive signage is in development for each site (funded by the Australian Government) which will be installed later this year.
- The projects have been very successful, and we have received several letters and positive comments about the work completed as well as media coverage.
- Further work is planned at these sites, to build on achievements to date and promote the value of the endangered Beach Scrub vegetation community.

6. Reef Catchments update

- To be given at the next meeting when Reef Catchments representative is in attendance
- Coastal project – see item 2 under Other Business

7. Sandfly Creek Management Plan

Action: Lisa Kermode and Helen Paulsen to organise quotes from appropriately qualified consultants for the preparation of the Sandfly Creek Management Plan, once the USL has been incorporated into the reserve (see item 3 under Other Business)

Action: Lisa Kermode to present report recommending animals be prohibited from Sandfly Creek to NEAC for consideration.

Action: Lisa Kermode to investigate options for interpretive and regulatory signage for Sandfly Creek in line with the Visual Identity Manual.

8. Pennyleaf control in Lynette drive

NEO and Joan Fitzsimmons met on site in December 2007 to discuss possible weed control work.

Action: Stuart Fyfe to provide a report to NEAC regarding probable costs to undertake this work, prior to the next meeting.

Action: Cr Cameron to discuss the use of Leucaena with Rural Affairs Advisory Committee.

Note: Leucaena is currently listed as a nominated locally significant species in Council's Pest Management Plan.

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

See attached report regarding the 2008/09 budget.

Action: Lisa Kermode will list 5 year budget as a discussion item for the next meeting.

Recommendation:

THAT the NEAC endorse the 2008/09 budget and submit it to Council for approval.

3. UPDATE ON STORMWATER PROJECTS

The following update was provided by Robyn Birkett – Stormwater Engineer.

1. Environmental Engineer/Scientist Position in Strategic Planning

Daniel Radovic, Council's Environmental Scientist (Stormwater Quality) finished work with Council on Friday 1 August 2008 to return to Darwin. His position is being advertised in coming weeks.

2. Implementation of Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) in Mackay Training

Council hosted workshops for internal and external staff on Bioretention and Constructed Wetland Design, Construction and Maintenance on 1 & 2 July 2008. This is the first training session to assist in implementation of WSUD in the Mackay area.

Working Groups

An internal working group is being established to address issues associated with implementation of WSUD. The first of these meetings is on Friday 8 August. This meeting will discuss biofiltration media and plant selection. The meetings involve Officers from Strategic Planning, Development Assessment – Engineering, Technical Services, Parks & Environment. An external working group is likely to be established following establishment of draft guidelines.

3. Goosepond Creek Catchment Management Plan

A draft Goosepond Creek Catchment Management Plan has been prepared. The measures proposed in the plan include revegetation in the Goosepond Creek floodplain. Following the 15 February 2008 flood event, the draft plan is not proposed to be finalised until the proposed works are assessed as part of the Goosepond Creek Flood Study. The flood study is in its final stages and is expected to be available for discussion in mid/late September. A briefing and report to Council to enable the draft Goosepond Creek Catchment Management Plan to go on public display is anticipated in October 2008.

4. Waterway Health Monitoring Program

The Waterway Health Monitoring Program has been designed to monitor the health of Mackay's urban waterways. This includes monitoring water quality parameters in event and ambient conditions. In subsequent years, the data will provide a baseline to assess expected improvements to waterway health through implementation of Water Sensitive Urban Design. Council's stormwater quality monitoring increased in the 07/08 to enable the collection of event stormwater samples to assist in calibration of Council's MUSIC modelling program. Additional funding from the State and Federal Government has been provided to supplement Council monitoring through the *Environmental Infrastructure Research Program*. The program has also funded the development of Council's MUSIC Modelling Guidelines. The automatic water quality sampler in Wellington Street (North) is operational and collected samples from the 23 July 2008 event. An automatic sampler on loan from Council's Water Treatment Program was also used in sampling the event.

Ambient sampling is undertaken quarterly at January, April, July and October. A report on Waterway Health Monitoring Program will be completed at the end of the 2008/2009 wet season.

4. **OTHER BUSINESS**

1. **Land for Wildlife Assessments.**

This project was introduced last year and seven assessments were conducted with the \$3500 allocated. (\$8000 was originally allocated annually in the 5 year budget, but as the budget was not adopted until late in the year, only part of the funds were allocated in the first year)

It is suggested that \$8,000 originally proposed for assessments in Mackay, be allocated, with an additional allocation for assessments in Sarina and Mirani. It is suggested that a minimum of \$12,000 be allocated, which would represent 24 assessments for the year, undertaken across the region according to demand. This could be reviewed next year and increased or decreased according to demand.

A letter was received in March 2008 from the Land for Wildlife State Coordinator thanking Council for its contribution and involvement in supporting Land for Wildlife in the region.

Action: An amount of \$12,000 for Land for Wildlife assessments, be included within the NEAC 2008/09 budget for consideration by Council.

2. **Mackay Coastal Project**

Following on from the very successful Sarina Coastal Guidelines and Sustainable Landscapes project, it is suggested that this project be extended to Mackay, in partnership with MWNRM and local catchment groups.

See attached Council report

Recommendation: THAT the NEAC endorse the recommendations within the report for consideration by Council.

3. **Sandfly Creek Unallocated State Land**

The Department of Natural Resources and Water have contacted Council to see whether the currently Unallocated State Land lot 902 on SP190229, adjacent to Sandfly Creek Environmental Reserve, be incorporated into the Reserve.

See attached Council report

Recommendation: THAT NEAC recommend Council accept the inclusion of the Unallocated State Land, Lot 902 on SP190229 into the Sandfly Creek Environmental Reserve.

4. **Round 1 Community Environmental Projects**

See attached Council report

Recommendation: THAT projects 1 and 2 (Friends of Slade Point Reserve and Mackay and District Turtlewatch) be supported within the \$25,000 budget allocation, and that applicants for projects 3 and 4 (Beaconsfield State School and Friends of Morag McNichol Reserve) be advised that their applications have been unsuccessful in this instance, but will be considered in the next funding round.

Action: Lisa Kermode to notify the successful applicants, and advise the unsuccessful applicants that their will be considered in the next funding round.

Action: Lisa Kermode to advertise the next round shortly with applications due at the end of November. The committee will consider the applications at the January 2009 meeting.

5. Terms of reference

The Committee discussed the Terms of Reference for the Natural Environment Advisory Committee and proposed the following changes: that the position titles for the three Council officers be changed to reflect recent title changes, that the reference to the MWNRM group be changed to reflect the organisation's recent name change, and that the committee be expanded to include representatives from the Pioneer Catchment and Landcare Group and the Sarina Landcare Catchment Management Association.

Recommendation: THAT the revised terms of reference be endorsed and submitted to Council for consideration.

6. Membership

Action: Lisa Kermode to contact the community representatives regarding recommendations made during this meeting.

Action: Lisa Kermode to write to the outgoing community members on behalf of the committee thanking them for their contribution and inviting them to reapply.

Action: Council to advertise the two community member positions and write to Reef Catchments, Pioneer Catchment and Landcare Group and Sarina Landcare Catchment Management Association inviting each group to nominate a representative.

7. Significant Tree Register

A draft format/contents was considered by NEAC at the October 2007 meeting. The committee recommended that this be accepted in principle and that the register relate to trees on Council land only at this stage.

Action: The committee to prepare a brief for the project and seek costings from appropriately qualified consultants.

8. Reporting on projects

Action: That a brief update on current projects be included as an attachment to the meeting agenda.

9. East Point Development

Committee members expressed concern that motorbike riders were accessing the East Point land and causing land degradation.

Action: Lisa Kermode to contact Linda Pearson to arrange for a timetable for East Point development be presented at the next NEAC meeting, along with information regarding permit conditions/requirements to address land degradation issues.

5. NEXT MEETING

Monday 10 November 2008. 2-4pm Council Chambers

Meeting closed at 5.20 pm

RECORDED BY: Lisa Kermode