

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

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

APOLOGIES: Stuart Holley

1. REVIEW OF PREVIOUS MINUTES - MATTERS ARISING

1. Possible Review of the Natural Environment Plan.

Lisa Kermode has met with Derek Ball from Reef Catchments. Derek has indicated that Reef Catchments are keen to be involved in the review. A scoping document is currently being developed.

The committee discussed possible measures to protect vegetation across the municipality.

Action: Helen and Lisa to prepare a brief report detailing options for a tree or vegetation protection policy for the committee's consideration, drawing on examples from other municipalities.

2. Slade Point Reserve Project

Landscaping works and seat installation are currently underway. It is anticipated that the remaining works will be completed at a cost of less than \$10,000, so the balance of the funds remaining from the \$30,000 originally allocated, can be reallocated to other projects.

Cr. May mentioned that the Slade Point Reserve brochure is currently being reprinted.

3. Sandfly Creek Management Plan

Lisa has prepared a brief for consultants interested in undertaking a management plan. This will be sent out early this week, and submissions are due at the end of the first week of December.

Action: That Committee members note for review of submissions when received in December.

Lisa has prepared a report recommending animals be prohibited from Sandfly Creek for NEAC's consideration. This item is also listed for consideration in the management plan brief for Sandfly Creek.

Action: Members to read the report and email any changes to Lisa by Friday. Lisa to finalise the report and submit it to council for consideration as soon as possible.

Recommendation: That the NEAC endorse the recommendations within the report for consideration by council.

Interpretive signs similar to the Shorebird, Turtle and Beach Scrub signs would cost approximately \$1500 each, plus design costs. Lisa is liaising with Reef Catchments who are

keen to assist with this project. Up to \$10,000 may be available through the State Government's Natural Resource Awareness Grants program.

The committee discussed other proposed works at Sandfly Creek and environs.

Action: The NEAC request a special meeting be held to review and comment on the concept plan for the Q150 arts project, specifically relating to Sandfly Creek.

4. Pennyleaf control in Lynette drive

Stuart Fyfe provided information on the indicative costs for undertaking this weed control project would be in the vicinity of \$7100 initial work and \$8960 follow up over a two year period.

Recommendation: That this project be put on hold for the moment, pending further information regarding priority weeds for the area, which will come from the Natural Environment Plan and Pest Management plan reviews.

5. Land for Wildlife Assessments.

Assessments undertaken, or in progress, since last meeting include:

Annie Wood Park (council property)

1 rural property in Sarina area

2 rural properties in Finch Hatton area

1 rural property at Bloomsbury

Conversion of a property in Balberra from 'working towards' to full registration.

Lisa has also written an Envirochat article and an 'In Focus' article about the program, which will both be published in November.

6. Mackay Coastal Project

The report recommending that this project be undertaken was accepted by council

7. Sandfly Creek Unallocated Land

The report recommending that this land be accepted into the environmental reserve was accepted by council.

8. Community Environmental Projects

The report recommending the allocation of funds was accepted by council.

The November round of the Community Environmental Projects is now open. Submissions are due by the end of the month and will be allocated at the next NEAC meeting.

9. Terms of reference

The updated terms of reference for the committee was accepted by council and is available from Lisa.

10. Membership

Advertising for new membership is happening at the moment. Letters of thanks have been sent to outgoing members and to Reef Catchments and the two Landcare groups seeking representatives.

11. Significant tree register

Committee to prepare brief for the project. The existing draft format/contents is available to assist.

Action: Lisa to circulate the existing document

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

Budget tabled at meeting

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 was advertised and applications closed on 13 October 2008. Two applications were received and unfortunately, after an offer, the preferred candidate declined the position.

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

An internal working group has been meeting to 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 February/March 2009. A briefing and report to Council to enable the draft Goosepond Creek Catchment Management Plan to go on public display is anticipated in March 2009.

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. Helen and Lisa to consider options for promotion of environmental news – either in council's 'In Focus' magazine or a separate publication.

5. NEXT MEETING

Special meeting Monday 15th December 2008. 2 pm Council Chambers
To discuss membership and community environmental projects.

Next regular meeting

Monday 2nd February 2009 – 2 pm, Council Chambers (with new community and agency members).

Committee to set meeting dates for 2009 at this meeting (April, June, August, October, December)

Meeting closed at 4.10 pm

RECORDED BY: Lisa Kermode