

Minutes

Minutes of the Koala Beach Wildlife & Habitat Management Committee Meeting held Wednesday 29 June 2022

Venue: Virtual

Time: 1:00pm

Present: Irene Timmins, Rosealie Vallance, (Community Representatives), Cr Meredith Dennis, Jane Lofthouse, Scott Benitez Hetherington, Frances Smith-Wright (Minutes) (Tweed Shire Council) **Informal:** Noel Hart, Helen Hart

Apologies: Mayor Chris Cherry, Yvonne Gardiner

As the Chair of the Committee (Mayor Cherry) is an apology for the meeting, it was agreed that Jane Lofthouse would chair this meeting.

Jane opened the meeting with an Acknowledgement of Country.

Minutes of Previous Meeting:

Moved: Irene Timmins

Seconded: Rosealie Vallance

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Koala Beach Wildlife & Habitat Management Committee meeting held Wednesday 23 March 2022 as tabled be accepted as a true and accurate record of the proceedings of that meeting.

Outstanding Actions: Refer to Action List

OA.0221-1 – Gutter cover trials

Gutter covers were successful using rubber skirts. Working group to provide a list of priority sites where they are needed prior to next season. Curlew season from mid-August. The numbers of covers will depend on overall cost and ongoing maintenance. Discussion on potential to use “Community Drain Rangers” to monitor covers.

Agenda Items:

A1.1 Logo and Signage Project

Discussion on the design and placement of entrance signs. There has been no further action on this item.

“Wildlife Protection Area” entrance road signs underway. Placement of signs:

1. Tom Merchant Drive – at start of vegetation past soccer field
2. Eastern entry – need to look at position of sign in relation to entry sign and school signs. Working with traffic unit to resolve sign placement.

Discussion was had relating to refreshing the “No Cats No Dogs” sign. Taking into account the cost factor and time since installation, this will be deferred due to other signage priorities.

The Koala Beach Estate entrance sign will be looked at when the new committee is convened giving them the opportunity to be involved in the process. The traffic unit will need to be involved in design and placement as it is within the road reserve. Next steps will be concept design and then present to traffic unit.

A1.2 Communication

Resident survey.

Jane and Rosalie to discuss Survey Monkey registration prior to next meeting.

Fence restrictions reminder notice

Scott presented to the committee a draft version of the “fencing compliance” reminder notice postcard that will be distributed throughout the estate and to local real-estate agencies. A few suggested additions:

1. Change colour of logo to original colour
2. Add “If you choose to have a fence...” (Noel noted fences an option, not a necessity).
3. Mitigation strategies for new owners.
4. Vintage stamp “ REMINDER” on postcard front
5. Add “Is your fence wildlife friendly?”
6. Add resident committee contact email address

***Action 0622-1:** Scott to update draft fence restrictions reminder notice and send out to committee for review.*

Welcome pack – In the works – no update

Local school environmental project

Rosalie confirmed that Pottsville school very committed to environmental program; this would involve Year 5 & 6. Sarah Jantos (Green Heroes) has a robust way for working with schools and has skills to engage kids. In the process of bringing Sarah and Leonie (artist) together to talk. Project needs to be fleshed out and consider how it may translate into a mural on the bridge.

Noel suggested using stencils which will be designed by the school kids which would speed up the process and reduce use of traffic control if painting directly on bridge. Preparatory work of cleaning and sealing area to be painted could be carried out by a contractor.

Rosalie and Noel to discuss further prior to next meeting.

Koala Beach Community Day

Irene proposed holding a casual community day to engage with residents and celebrate the 25 years of residents moving into the estate. See item in General Business.

A1.3 Working Group report on progress

Addressed as we went through agenda.

A2. Environmental

A2.1 Wildlife Surveys

Report distributed to the committee prior to the meeting. Scott gave a summary of the wildlife survey and monitoring reports and status.

Blossom Bat management and monitoring

Baseline assessment complete in trial plots. Weed control underway. Seedling plantings when conditions are favourable.

Coastal Planigale management and monitoring

Artificial cover object (ACO) surveys continuing monthly. The most recent check results indicated no activity although long term monitoring has shown steady population numbers.

Irene noted that the increase in trail bikes in the area may be causing this low activity. Scott suggested Irene to keep us posted on bike activity. Rangers and bushland officers are also keeping an eye on trail bikes in the area.

Glossy black-cockatoos management and monitoring

Hollow monitoring complete. No GBC activity recorded. In northern NSW in general there is low activity of Glossy black-cockatoos at the present time.

Koala management and monitoring

2021 monitoring completed.

Results were presented in a workshop to Council. The full report will go to the August Council meeting.

Artificial hollow maintenance & monitoring

Nest box monitoring shows steady and consistent results with use by a range of species including sugar gliders. Report to be finalised and published.

Vertebrate pest management & monitoring

Actions have been flood affected but conditions more favourable now.

Noel enquired as to the “sludge hole” near the footbridge and rock wall, whether this would be a breeding ground for Cane Toads. Scott confirmed that it could be but it also provides habitat and water for rails, Glossy Black Cockatoos and frog species. It was designed to dry out as a creek bed but we could look at planting additional dense vegetation around it, enough to restrict toad access.

***Action 0622-2:** Vertebrate pest management and monitoring- Scott to discuss with crew planting dense vegetation around creek bed (near footbridge) to prevent Cane Toad access.*

Signage, engagement & education

Newsletter currently being finalised for publication.

Reactive maintenance

Illegal bike tracks under surveillance, usage currently low. Signage in place. Remedial earthworks to be continued once dry.

A2.2 Significant Tree Register

The committee discussed the proposed draft protocol for managing street trees in Koala Beach. Scott shared the draft protocol and discussed the proposed decision tree, replacement species and replacement locations.

Meredith enquired as to the communication pathway if a tree is removed / replaced. Scott confirmed that if Koala Tress are involved then one of his team members are informed. It was agreed that it would be beneficial if this step was added to the draft protocol.

Action 0622-3: *Scott to add a notification of the committee step to the draft protocol for the management of street trees in Koala Beach.*

A2.3 Habitat Destruction

Coastal Ranger on alert with regard to areas impacted by bike track construction once areas start to dry up.

A3. Economic

A3.1 2021/22 Budget update and finance report

Scott discussed the budget and finance report as distributed to the committee prior to the meeting.

Rosealie enquired as to the difference between 2022 and 2023 budget totals. Scott confirmed that the annual levy is currently approximately \$90,000 per annum. The over allocation of budget is a result of funds committed over two year works programs (habitat restoration and pest management).

The reserve funds are being allocated to these works as required and also provide some opportunity to address new and emerging opportunities.

Rosealie suggested that providing some additional detail on actions identified by the committee for completion this year would improve the transparency of the budget management process. For example, the committee requested that the signage budget and relevant priority actions listed be updated to include the proposed school project, estate entry signs and community day.

Action 0622-4: *Scott to make the requested changes to the budget in preparation of the 2022/23 budget.*

General Business:

GB1. Dog issues/complaints and follow up actions

Irene confirmed that a decision had been made at Council that further action would be taken if there are illegal dogs on the Estate. Letter to be sent to residents with dogs. Formal interviews will be done for evidence gathering .Meredith confirmed that Council were taking this very seriously .Jane to give an update at next meeting.

Action 0622-5: *Jane to give up date at next meeting on actions regarding unauthorised dogs on the estate.*

GB2. Road safety petition update – letter received from Roads section listing actions.

Irene informed the committee that this had been a successful petition. Future actions involving stencils on road, advisory radar and traffic calming devices.

Rosalie thanked everyone involved.

Scott suggested staying in contact with Ray Clark in the traffic unit to follow up on progress.

GB3. Entry road signage update.

Already covered in A1.1

GB4. Spotty photograph update and replacement of banner. Letter of thanks to owner of photograph.

A letter of thanks to be sent to Kim Kleidon, copyright holder of the Spotty photograph, as Kim has given permission for the image to be used for materials relating to Koala Beach estate. All uses of the image to be credited.

The old damaged banner needs to be taken down, noting that another one could not be hung on the trees.

GB5. Koala Beach 25 years celebration

Irene led discussion on holding a Community day to celebrate 25 Years of Koala Beach to:

- Connect with new residents
- Reinforce the messaging around Estate rules – fencing / animals
- Create awareness and emphasis on environmental values for the local community

Include in day: TBLALC talk, face painting, hand-outs, local plant give away.

Jane noted things to consider:

- Engagement – promote through newsletter
- Scope of activities and costs involved

Council staff would be available to attend but noting that this is driven by community and not a Council organised event. This makes it more grass roots and accessible.

GB6. Cudgera Creek

Noel asked if Cudgera Creek is considered part of Koala Beach Estate. He noted the reported poor water quality results. Scott advised that Cudgera Creek is Crown land adjacent to Koala Beach.

Water quality is monitored every two months and is influenced by landscape scale land uses in the catchment including agriculture. The water quality report for 2021 also indicates that poor water quality results in Cudgera Creek may be affected by the flying-fox camp at Pottsville Environment Park. Water quality is also affected by weather events. Scott noted that the recently released report for 2021 is an excellent source of information on the monitoring and management actions underway. Jane suggested that Tom Alletson be invited to a future meeting to provide further information. The water quality report is available at [Tweed Waterways Report 2021 \(arcgis.com\)](https://arcgis.com).

GB7. Tweed Conservation Strategy Survey

Council is partnering with the community to prepare a new strategy that reflects the current conservation status, threats to the environment and positive land management opportunities. Survey now open. <https://www.yoursaytweed.com.au/conservationstrategy>

There being no further business the meeting closed at 3.30 pm.

Next Meeting: TBA

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Meeting date	No.	Action	Status
4 Nov 2020	1120-2	<i>Senior Program Leader Biodiversity to arrange for a 'Code of Conduct for Council Committee Members, Delegates of Council and Council Advisors' briefing at the next Committee meeting.</i>	Deferred to new committee.
4 Nov 2020	1120-7	<i>Development of an integrated communication strategy to include estate entry and traffic warning signs to be included in next 2021/22 budget and to be included as an Agenda item for next meeting.</i>	JL to organise meeting with Communications & Engagement Unit-complete Maintain on agenda
4 Nov 2020	1120-8	<i>Committee members encouraged to form a working group to meet outside of the committee meetings to develop ideas for the communications strategy. Responsibility: Committee.</i>	Ongoing
3 Feb 2021	0221-1	<i>JL to check and provide feedback on gutter cover trials.</i>	Will be expanded next year. Numbers dependant on cost and monitoring.
7 April	0421-5	<i>Scott to arrange a site visit (2 hours) for the committee to feature the habitat restoration program, nest box program and common blossom bat monitoring and management.</i>	31 March 2022. 8.30am. All participants notified. Postponed to new committee.
4 August	0821-1	<i>Jane and Scott to seek clarification on Council's position on assistance animals in public areas including sensitive locations and whether a policy should be developed.</i>	In progress – best addressed in the review of Companion Animals Policy
4 August	0821-2	<i>Working group to walk around site and consider areas for different types of signage placement.</i>	In progress
4 August	0821-4	<i>Council to assist with design of folder for Welcome pack.</i>	No further progress
4 August	0821-5	<i>Scott to provide further information about tree replacement procedures in Koala Beach estate.</i>	Draft protocol included in 29 June Meeting.
7 October	1021-1	<i>Jane to present Entrance design and construction ideas to sign writers.</i>	No update – actions identified and agreed. Traffic Unit to be involved as in road reserve.
7 October	1021-3	<i>Scott to ask Tanya to visit Creek site and put together an enhancement plan suggesting new plantings that can be done.</i>	In progress, Scott to re-schedule. Rhonda noted this site is included in the updated restoration plan.
23 March	0322-1	<i>Jane to check with ranger staff to determine process for checking addresses for animal registrations at Koala Beach Estate.</i>	There is no process in place for animals registered to the NSW Companion Animals register to be "flagged" by address.
23 March	0322-2	<i>Jane to request sign unit to draft a suitable sign based on the example provided (including curlew and koala) and arrange a site visit to confirm appropriate locations on both entry roads.</i>	Sign design and production requested 30/05/22 Referred to Traffic Unit for approval 07/07/22 Site Visit requested to confirm best location for eastern sign
29 June	0622-1	<i>Scott to update draft fence restrictions reminder notice and send out to committee for review.</i>	
29 June	0622-2	<i>Vertebrate pest management and monitoring- Scott to discuss with crew planting dense vegetation around creek bed (near footbridge) to prevent Cane Toad access.</i>	

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29 June	0622-3	<i>Scott to add a notification of the committee step to the draft protocol for the management of street trees in Koala Beach.</i>	
29 June	0622-4	<i>Scott to make the requested changes to the budget in preparation of the 2022/23 budget.</i>	
29 June	0622-5	<i>Jane to give up date at next meeting on actions regarding unauthorised dogs on the estate.</i>	