

Minutes

Minutes of the Tweed Coast and Waterways Advisory Committee Meeting held Wednesday 12 October 2022

Venue: South Sea Islander Room, Tweed Heads Civic Centre

Time: 9am

Present:

Cr Chris Cherry (Chair); Cr Nola Firth; Tom Alletson; Jane Lofthouse; David Cranwell; Marcello Sano; Lindy Smith; Robert Quirk; Joanna Gardener; Sam Dawson, Brian Bycroft, Peter Comerford, Grahame McIlveen, Adam Andrewartha, Ian Berger, Larry Woodland, Carl Cormack, Rhonda James (Chair, on-line), Stephanie Papadopoulos (TSC Manager Corporate Governance), Frances Smith-Wright (Minutes).

Apologies:

Ben Fitzgibbon

Acknowledgement of the Bundjalung Nation

Tom welcomed all continuing and new members to the meeting. Opportunity was provided for all members to introduce themselves and their particular interest in the committee.

Stephanie Papadopoulos (Manager Corporate Governance) welcomed the new committee and gave a briefing on obligations for members of the new committee, including: Code of Conduct, Terms of Reference, gifts and benefits and voting rights.

It was noted that there was no reference to voting rights in the Terms of Reference. Robert questioned whether voting decisions were on either majority or consensus. It was confirmed that voting was on a majority basis.

Action: Terms of reference of the Tweed Coast and Waterways Advisory Committee (TCWC) to be updated to note the voting rights of committee members.

Stephanie proceeded to ask for nominations for the position of Chairperson to the new committee.

Rhonda James was nominated by Robert Quirk and Lindy Smith. Rhonda accepted the nomination. There were no more nominations put forward.

Rhonda James was elected Chairperson of the committee. Unanimously voted in by all members present.

Cr Cherry thanked Rhonda and with the agreement of the committee assumed the role of Chair for this meeting due to Rhonda attending on-line.

Minutes of Previous Meeting:

Moved: David Cranwell

Seconded: Robert Quirk

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Tweed Coast and Waterways Committee meeting held Wednesday 8 June 2022 be accepted as a true and accurate record of the proceedings of that meeting.

Business Arising:

BA1. River Restoration Funding – Tweed eligibility.

Tom provided an overview of correspondence from Council to the NSW Government regarding riverbank rehabilitation funding. Acknowledgements had been received from Dougal Saunders MP and Geoff Provest MP, however there had been no actual response to either of the letters sent.

Cr Cherry mentioned that she had spoken to Janelle Saffin MP who said she would follow up. The committee discussed the fact that with elections approaching and caretaker mode being enacted within two months that it would be worth following up with State and Shadow Ministers for a response.

Action: *Tom to follow up on previous letters.*

BA2. Kingscliff Flooding

Tom advised that there is no further information at present, and that this matter is being managed by Council's flood engineers and will be reported to the community primarily through the Floodplain Management Advisory Committee.

Lindy suggested that Kingscliff and all other Associations write to the Minister to request a moratorium on further development on the flood plain.

The National Emergency Management Agency (previously National Recovery and Resilience Agency) has commissioned CSIRO to undertake a project to understand the climate, catchment, and hydrological drivers within the Northern Rivers region of New South Wales.

Targeted community engagement sessions will be available end of October early November in Tweed Heads and Murwillumbah. Committee members have been provided with the details of the community engagement opportunities.

BA3. Chinderah stormwater drain and maintenance.

Tom confirmed that Darren Phillips (Flooding & Stormwater Unit) and his team had canoed down the river to the identified area and noted that there were some fallen trees but that the drain was generally free flowing.

BA4. Planning and Strategy Development

The committee discussed that there was no Integrated Catchment Management Program of works for the Upper catchment. Apart from Council, there is no agency driving works in this area, but it is essential moving forward. Tom has committed to providing more information and recommendations on this matter in future meetings.

BA5. Letter of appreciation to outgoing members

The committee discussed sending letters of appreciation to outgoing members: Bill Hoskins, Bruce Peate and John Harbison.

Action: The committee resolved that letters of appreciation would be sent to outgoing committee members. Tom to action.

BA6.Fingal Peninsula lagoons- environmental conditions and tidal flushing

Larry discussed the deteriorated state of Wommin Lake and Wommin Lagoon on Fingal Peninsula. He requested that Council add these areas to its water quality monitoring schedule. Tom agreed that this could be done. Tom presented a timeline of photos indicating the changing size of the delta at the channel of Wommin Lake and the dramatic reduction in seagrass over several years.

A previous study in 1996 on this area, sent to Tom by Larry indicated similar concerns. Tom to review this document in full prior to the next meeting.

Action: Tom to arrange a meeting with Jonathon Yantsch and Larry Woodland to look at entrance to Wommin Lake.

Action: Tom to add Wommin Lake and lagoon to the regular water quality monitoring schedule.

Agenda

A1. Foreshore Erosion at Terranora Inlet, John Follent Park on Keith Compton Drive.

The committee discussed ongoing erosion of the foreshore in this area and the extensive work and expense to correct it.

As this issue is beyond the scope of Council to manage, and the obligation rests with the State Government to keep the adjacent navigation clear for commercial use, it was suggested by Cr Cherry that the committee recommends to Council that it writes to the relevant NSW Minister highlighting the major concerns of the local community due to loss of both recreational and commercial amenity, if the erosion is allowed to proceed. Letters of support from commercial fisherman, who are impacted by conditions in the navigation channel would also assist the cause.

It was noted that the major NSW Government investment in the Southern Boat Harbour slipway further highlights the need for functional navigation depths in the channel, with dredged sand to positively benefit the community.

Moved: Robert Quirk

Seconded: Lindy Smith

RECOMMENDED that the Tweed Coast and Waterways Committee requests Council to write to the NSW Minister for Transport highlighting the major concerns of the community regarding foreshore erosion at Terranora Inlet, along Keith Compton Drive, and the urgent necessity for this to be addressed using sand dredged from the adjacent Terranora Inlet navigation channel.

A2. Tweed River Estuary Water Quality

There have been incidents of poor water quality in the river around Murwillumbah in the past few months. A media release was issued in relation to low pH levels in the main estuary in

Murwillumbah and commercial fisherman reporting red spot disease on fish. Red spot has been linked to Acid Sulphate Soil (ASS) run-off.

Tom noted that a research project on ASS and floodplain management funded by the Marine Estate Management Strategy and compiled by the NSW Water Research Laboratory is presently, it is understood, being held in the relevant Ministers Office, and not being released.

The Committee discussed the relation between agricultural practices as well as drought and flood events affecting the release of Acid Sulphate into the river.

Lindy raised the impact of water mining and its relationship to the ground water system and hence Acid Sulphate release into the environment.

Tom emphasised that it is important for Council and other NSW agencies to re-engage with floodplain landowners on ASS management. The evidence of ongoing ASS problems are there, and we cannot be complacent.

A3. Tweed River Estuary Coastal Management Program, certification and implementation

Tom noted that the Coastal Management Program (CMP) has been completed but has not been certified yet*. Tom to email committee members a copy of the CMP. At the next meeting Tom will provide an overview of recent action in implementation and an annual review. Graham enquired as to the inclusion of Terranora in the plan. Tom confirmed that Terranora is incorporated in the Terranora and Cobaki Management Plan.

*Council received advice on 14 October that the CMP had been certified.

A4. Foreshore erosion stabilisation Cudgen Creek, Old Fingal Boat Harbour and Mooball Creek

Ongoing erosion at a very popular small sandy area at Cudgen Creek has been stabilised with Geobags. These have created a stable and functional structure. Past geobags used at Condong Boat Ramp have been successful and the bags have not sustained any significant damage in 10 years, including 2 major floods. The same technique has been used at the Old Fingal Boat Harbour.

At Sutherland Point, Council will be putting in a geobag wall at another popular swimming location, and natural rock will be used to stabilise three areas at Mooball Creek. Mooball Creek should be completed prior to Christmas. Other significant erosion stabilisation projects currently being developed are at Chillingham, Quans Lane, Tygalgah and the Condong reach of the river, downstream of Cane Road.

A5. Mid-Tweed River flood erosion management

Consultants have been engaged to look at riverbank erosion upstream of Byangum and prepare designs that will ensure the river channel does not change or realign. Laser survey of the landscape shows severe riverbank erosion at numerous locations and a total of over 300,000 cubic metres of bank material scoured away.

A final stage of this report is to be released 17 October 2022. This will prioritise areas for attention.

Tom informed the committee that Local Land Services provided \$200,000.00 to initiate works with verbal assurance that another \$400,000.00 will be allocated to the Tweed area. More information will be forthcoming at the next meeting.

Tom showed the committee a series of photos of the recently completed bank erosion and fish habitat enhancement project at Myall Creek, Murwillumbah, with a range of treatments including rock fillets, hardwood root balls incorporated into revetment and the fenced and revegetated riverbank.

Graham asked the committee to assist the Murwillumbah Rowing Club (the club) in stabilising the riverbank near the club. This had previously been used for Northern Rivers regattas prior to flood damage in the last two years. During the floods the club was used as a hub by the SES and could possibly be used again in future floods.

Tom outlined his current work with the club which includes stabilisation of the bank. It was noted that this is stage 1 of what is required and that a ramp to launch sculls will also be needed. Tom will continue working with the club and has suggested the club prepare concept designs and cost estimates to be ready for future grants.

Moved: Cr Cherry (Mayor)

Seconded: Graham McIlveen

RECOMMENDATION that the Tweed Coast and Waterways Committee recommends Council work with the Murwillumbah and Tweed Rowing Clubs to apply for future grants that will assist in the restoration of the riverbank.

Graham can provide a letter of support if needed.

Outstanding Items

O1. Cobaki Lakes Saltmarsh Rehabilitation

No update available.

General Business

GB1. Bray Park Weir

Following a request for an update on this issue by Joanna, Tom presented a brief update from Water Unit staff. The reference group established for the project considered several options for raising the weir, including:

- A hinged barrier
- Blocks
- Narrowing and raising the weir

Council found that the hinged barrier and blocks were unviable and unsafe respectively. The revised proposal is to investigate narrowing and raising of the weir. Joanna enquired as to the impact this would have on farmland and riparian areas. Tom confirmed that this is included in the investigation.

GB2. Gold Coast Airport and pollution concerns

Lindy presented concerns about the levels of Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) in the Cobaki Broadwater environment. Noting that levels of PFAS detected in samples at

the Gold Coast Airport exceeded health-based values for marine, drinking and recreational waterways.

Lindy also referred to a CSIRO study on remediation of soils affected by PFAS, which indicated that uptake of the chemical by a rush species was considerable. This species is endemic to Cobaki and other surrounding areas.

GB3. Coastal Management Plan

Funding of \$200,000 received. Coastal Hazard study to be prioritised.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Tweed Coast and Waterways Committee will be held Wednesday 14 December 2022.

The meeting closed at 12.30pm

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S COMMENTS:

A1. Foreshore Erosion at Terranora Inlet, John Follent Park on Keith Compton Drive
Nil.

A5. Mid-Tweed River flood erosion management
Nil.

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS:

A1. Foreshore Erosion at Terranora Inlet, John Follent Park on Keith Compton Drive
That Council writes to the NSW Minister for Transport highlighting the major concerns of the community regarding foreshore erosion at Terranora Inlet, along Keith Compton Drive, and the urgent necessity for this to be addressed using sand dredged from the adjacent Terranora Inlet navigation channel.

A5. Mid-Tweed River flood erosion management
That Council works with the Murwillumbah and Tweed Rowing Clubs to apply for future grants that will assist in the restoration of the riverbank.