

Minutes

Minutes of the Tweed Coast and Waterways Advisory Committee Meeting held Wednesday 14 June 2023

Venue:

South Sea Islander Room, Tweed Heads Civic Centre

Time:

9am

Present:

Rhonda James (Chair), Tom Alletson, Jane Lofthouse, Cr Meredith Dennis (Deputy Mayor), Peter Comerford, Robert Quirk, Grahame McIlveen, Adam Andrewartha, Lindy Smith, Ian Berger, Jonathan Yantsch, Larry Woodland, Brian Bycroft, Carl Cormack, Joanna Gardener, David Cranwell, Dan Ware, Frances Smith-Wright (Minutes).

Guests:

Matthew Bloor and Eli Szandala (Tweed Shire Council).

Apologies:

Cr Chris Cherry (Mayor), Cr Nola Firth, Ben Fitzgibbon, Jordan Vickers, Naomi Searle.

Acknowledgement of the Bundjalung Nation

Minutes of Previous Meeting:

Moved: Robert Quirk

Seconded: Larry Woodland

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Tweed Coast and Waterways Advisory Committee meeting held Wednesday 5 April 2023 be accepted as a true and accurate record of the proceedings of that meeting.

Business Arising:

BA.1 Flood Risk Management

Robert informed the committee that after a meeting with the CSIRO it was concluded that Council staff would continue with the existing Tweed River flood study and that CSIRO will peer review it on completion. If there are funds available in 2 years, then the CSIRO will look at doing its own flood model.

BA.2 Far North Coast Regional Water Strategy

The committee discussed the need for an Upper Tweed River Catchment Management Strategy. The Marine Estate Strategy and Coastal Management Act do not provide the detail or direction to manage the catchment area. Catchment Management Authorities previously performed this work. It was suggested to include this topic in the letter to Janelle Saffin MP when the committee invites her to a meeting in the future.

The Far North Coast Regional Water Strategy is expected to be completed and released shortly and will be provided to the committee. The strategy may provide structure in the field of integrated catchment management for non-coastal parts of the river.

BA.3 Feedback on priorities discussed at April meeting

Tom gave a brief outline on priorities discussed for the coming year. A summary of the projects most consistently put forward as priorities from the members were:

Strategic Priorities

- Complete the Coastline Coastal Management Plan and implement actions from the Tweed Estuary Coastal Management Plan.
- Upper Catchment Management Plan – with reference to the Far North Coast Regional Water Strategy.
- Vessel use contributing to wake erosion and amenity issues on the river.
- Maintaining the ecological values of the coastal estuaries and the river.
- Rehabilitation of vegetation along waterways.
- Rehabilitation of riverbank erosion.
- Water quality – implementing steps to rectify problems.
- Low lying land and initiation of projects to bring back wetlands.
- Sea Level Rise – planning for tidal inundation, impacts on property and infrastructure.
- Marine vegetation migration.

Issues of Concern

- Boat Ramps – congestion problems.
- Wommin Lagoon flushing.

Agenda Items:

A.1 Project updates Waterways– Uki River rehabilitation works and Kynumboon floodplain rainforest revegetation

Matthew Bloor, Council's Project Officer Waterways gave an update on two projects.

- **Bringing back flying fox habitat to Kynumboon floodplain**

Funding from the NSW government of \$181,000 has enabled the restoration of a 3.2 hectare property into a wetland and potential flying fox habitat. This property has been used to grow sugar cane.

So far 7,500 trees have been planted and mulched, with several thousand more to come. The owner would ultimately like to preserve the area through zoning / covenant to ensure its maintained and protected in perpetuity. The project will be promoted, and community involvement will be achieved through tree planting during Local Government Week and a National Tree Day event.

- **Mid-Tweed River restoration project - Uki**

This project has obtained funding of approximately \$600,000 from North Coast Local Land Services and will restore a 750m reach of Tweed River heavily impacted by 2022 flooding. The project involves rock protection, pile fields and revegetation, and re-building a point bar to maintain the meandering form of the river. A recent workshop on river restoration was held in Uki – and covered best practice techniques in bank management.

Tom noted that the grant above is the only money received from the NSW Government for river rehabilitation following the 2022 floods.

A.2 Project updates: Sustainable Agriculture

Eli Szandala, Council's Program Leader Sustainable Agriculture gave a presentation to the committee highlighting a recent project.

- **Future Drought Project**

The Tweed Shire consists of 130,000 hectares of farmland. Of this, 27,000 hectares are used for grazing. With rainfall predicted to be more extreme in the future, the intent of the

project was to support and educate local farmers to look after and manage their grazing during these extremes.

The Future Drought Fund started in 2019 and introduced initiatives to promote good pastures, soil health and water quality. The project provided drought preparedness plans to 6 local graziers covering 800 acres.

A key target is soil organic carbon (presently at 3%). Increasing soil organic carbon by 1%, increases the holding capacity of dry soil by 144,000lts water / hectare, thus reducing runoff and local flooding as well as increasing grass production during winter.

Part of the project includes dung beetle surveys and releases. Dung Beetles are widespread but are only active in summer. They recycle nutrients from cattle dung back into the soil. The project has introduced a dung beetle that will hopefully be active through winter.

Another aspect of the project was introducing Biochar to livestock feed. This may increase milk production and is a useful soil ameliorant. Results so far look promising with increased milk production and fat composition of milk. With beef cattle, results are at present inconclusive.

- **Blacks Drain Wetland Rehabilitation**

Gathering contemporary data on water quality from this well-researched acid sulphate soil problem area. Current pH 3.9 - 4.1. The Marine Estate Management Strategy has provided funding of \$100,000 to investigate wetland rehabilitation in the area, on land owned by Council.

A.3 Project updates – Tweed Coast Management Plan and Hastings Point Headland Management Plan.

Jane gave an overview of the Tweed Coast Management Plan and its progress. Consultants are now on board. Scoping study has been completed. Hazard study has commenced. Community survey coming out in July. Main emphasis in the survey is to find out what people value most about, and how they use the coastline. This will remain open until October. An Options Study will then commence taking into account the hazards and risks identified. This will present how Council will manage the use of coastal areas and should be completed by early 2024. The draft management plan will then be prepared - September 2024.

The Hastings Point Headland Management Plan – Online community survey is now live on Your Say Tweed. So far, the message coming through from the community is to not change the headland and protect what is there.

Staff will soon be appointing a consultant to prepare the management plan.

Peter noted his interest in the preparation of a code of conduct for Cook Island, and possible inclusion in the Tweed Coast Management Plan. The island is inundated with divers and snorkellers and we need to protect the sanctuary.

General Business:

GB1. Robert raised the subject of McCleod's Creek zoning. This is the only creek on the flood plain that is mapped under C zones, which is a result of being mapped in the Resilience and Hazards SEPP as a Coastal Environment Area. Could this be included on the agenda when doing the Coastal Vulnerability Mapping?

Noted that there is an action in the Tweed River Estuary Coastal Management Plan (Action A4) relating to a review of SEPP Coastal Management Areas.

GB2. Proposal to redevelop boating facilities at Dry Dock Road Boat Ramp

John Stead, Tweed Chapter of Sailability has put forward a proposal for re-development of boating facilities at Dry Dock Road boat ramp. Sailability is a volunteer organisation that runs a sailing program for disabled clients. Tom advised that he has been working with the group on small scale improvements in the area and is supportive of the principle of upgrading the site overall, so that both the general public and Sailability have access to better facilities.

Moved: Peter Comerford

Seconded: Adam Andrewartha

RECOMMENDATION that Council works with Sailability to assist in the design phase of re-developing the boating facilities at Dry Dock Road boat ramp.

Tom to send the proposal to the committee via email.

Grahame suggested that the Rowing Club could contribute if the design included the capacity for rowing boats to dock.

GB3. Foysters Jetty

Lindy enquired into works being undertaken at Foysters Jetty. Tom advised that it is a contractor undertaking concrete pile remediation. Tom noted that the old concrete jetty at Jack Evans Boat Harbour is being removed by NSW Crown Lands and not replaced. Work to install stairs for diving and snorkelling in this location has commenced.

GB4 Sand Kerosene Inlet

Carl brought to the attention of the committee the build-up of sand at mouth of Kerosene Inlet.

The meeting closed at 12.00pm

Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Tweed Coast and Waterways Advisory Committee will be held Wednesday 9 August 2023.

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S COMMENTS:

GB2. Proposal to redevelop boating facilities at Dry Dock Road Boat Ramp
That Council works with Sailability to assist in the design phase of re-developing the boating facilities at Dry Dock Road boat ramp.

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS:

GB2. Proposal to redevelop boating facilities at Dry Dock Road Boat Ramp
That Council works with Sailability to assist in the design phase of re-developing the boating facilities at Dry Dock Road boat ramp.