

# Minutes

## Minutes of the Tweed Coast and Waterways Advisory Committee meeting held Wednesday 5 April 2023

### Venue:

South Sea Islander Room, Tweed Heads Civic Centre

### Time:

9am

### Present:

Cr Chris Cherry (Mayor), Cr Nola Firth, Jane Lofthouse, Tom Alletson, Rhonda James (Chair), Robert Quirk, Adam Andrewartha, Lindy Smith, Jonathan Yantsch, Larry Woodland, Joanna Gardener, David Cranwell, Sam Dawson, Marcello Sano (Virtual).

### Ex-Officio:

Frances Smith-Wright (Minutes), Jordan Vickers (TSC).

### Apologies:

Peter Comerford, Graham McIlveen, Ian Berger, Brian Bycroft.

### Acknowledgement of the Bundjalung Nation

#### Minutes of Previous Meeting:

Moved: **Robert Quirk**

Seconded: **Sam Dawson**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Tweed Coast and Waterways Advisory Committee meeting held Wednesday 8 February 2023 be accepted as a true and accurate record of the proceedings of that meeting.

### Business Arising:

#### **BA1. Water quality monitoring at Wommin Lake and Wommin Lagoon – Results update**

Tom presented January, February and March water monitoring event data compared to water quality objectives (NSW water quality guidelines). Wommin Lake presented no obvious problems, however Wommin Lagoon showed higher bacteria counts. Reasons for this could include restricted flushing, shorebirds or other mechanisms of bacteria input, or re-suspension from sediments. A minimum of a year's data will be required to identify trends. The committee discussed water quality results and potential impacts on swimming and recreational use. Tom confirmed that as per standard recommendations, be aware of changes in water quality after a rain event.

#### **BA2. Seawall at Jack Evans Boat Harbour**

Tom has spoken to NSW Crown Land officers about the degradation of the seawall. The Ministerial letter that was recommended by the committee has not yet been sent due to both the change in Government, and the desire to check in at a staff level to determine the appropriate process. Tom spoke to David Kirby (Senior Policy & Project Officer – Marine Estate Coastal Unit, Land & Asset Management) and he advised that Crown Lands is aware the seawall is in poor condition. An audit is being done across the State to ascertain who owns structures (identifying orphan assets) and what purpose they serve. Prioritised restoration of sea walls is on the NSW Government program. It was suggested that Geoff Provest, Member for Tweed be copied into future correspondence on this topic.

#### **BA3. Fish below Clarrie Hall Dam wall**

Sam requested an update on the congregation of fish that are trapped below the Dam wall. Water is being released from the dam to keep them healthy. Jonathan informed the committee that 16

Mega Litres of water was being released on 6 April as part of a cold-water pollution testing procedure. This is usually done outside of the Bass migration times to mitigate any harm to the fish.

#### **BA4. Flood Risk Management.**

Robert informed the committee that there was a community meeting on 5 April at Condong to discuss flood modelling. Correspondence from the organiser suggests that many community groups are proposing to Council that CSIRO undertake a flood modelling project, despite Council already doing one. Council initiated a flood study prior to the 2022 flood and will complete it within about 6 months. Council proposed to get CSIRO to peer review the flood model.

Questions that a new flood model will be used to assess are:

- would dredging have made any difference to the floods, and
- is the M1 affecting flood risk to the area?

#### **Agenda Items:**

##### **A1. Tweed Coast and Waterways Committee - Priorities for the forthcoming term**

Committee members have proposed the following initiatives as being their priorities:

Larry Woodland

1. Wommin Lagoon – Opening up the northern end of Wommin Lagoon to increase tidal flushing.
2. Coastal Management Program (CMP) – supports the recycling sand from the sand bypass back to Letitia Beach and Fingal Head Beach.
3. Boat Ramps – Congestion problems are excessive around Kennedy Drive and Fingal Head boat ramps causing safety issues with high numbers of Queensland boats. Do we look at paid parking to reduce congestion? Make improvements to Chinderah boat ramp?

**Action:** Jane to ask NSW Maritime if it has recently undertaken a Tweed River usage survey and if not, request this to be done.

Adam Andrewartha

1. Bogangar Residents Association enquiring after water quality reports on the canals and creeks. Canals are not monitored by Council as they are not for recreational use. Council does coastal creeks monitoring and could do water quality monitoring in Cudgen Lake.
2. Navigability and dredging in the Tweed River – around permanent mooring facilities.
3. Fingal Head Boat Harbour – Tenders from moored vessels in river are blocking beach access for other vessels and sailing club use. Refer issue to NSW Maritime as it is responsible for the authorised moorings.

Robert Quirk

1. Ballast filled wake board boats – causing riverbank erosion. In Council CMP areas were identified with a restriction on towing near Stotts island and upstream of the Murwillumbah boat ramp. NSW Maritime has not supported the requested towing limitations outlined in the Estuary Management Program. The committee discussed how to move this forward up to a State level.

**Moved:** Robert Quirk

**Seconded:** Sam Dawson

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

That Council invites Janelle Saffin MP, Member for Lismore, to a Tweed Coast and Waterways Advisory Committee meeting to discuss the boat wake issue, riverbank erosion and the character zones proposed in the Tweed River Estuary Coastal Management Program.

Sam Dawson

1. Endorsed actions and programs in place as well as an updated fish survey and water quality analysis.

David Cranwell

1. Requesting a survey of wetland behind Pottsville Waters in relation to flood studies.

Rhonda James

1. Maintaining ecological values of the 3 coastal estuaries.
2. Low-lying land and initiation of projects to bring back wetlands. May involve land buy-back schemes or agreement by landowners.
3. Rehabilitation of vegetation along waterways.
4. Support for actions to promote the Tweed River character zones.

Cr Chris Cherry

1. Management of ICOLLs and supporting the entrance opening strategy for Mooball Creek.
2. Water quality – actions that help improve water quality.
3. Better management of Jack Evans Boat Harbour as a regionally important recreation area.
4. Riverbank erosion management projects.

Jonathan Yantsch

1. Summarised DPI Fisheries priorities and responsibilities under the Fisheries Management Act and Marine Estate Management Act.
2. Address priority to keep doing what we can to preserve and enhance fish habitat and addressing key threatening processes.

Joanna Gardener

1. Riverbank erosion – could Council put up signs to indicate no wash areas? Not possible as unable to enforce it.
2. Upper reaches – Priority for rehabilitation and restoration. Suggests an assessment of upper catchment streams.
3. Overview of health of creeks in the upper river – do a comparison report on creek catchment condition.

Tom noted that an Upper Catchment Management Plan has been a major strategic goal for many years. At this time it is recommended that we wait until it is clear what the outcomes and implementation process for the Regional Water Strategy will be. Possibly invite Local Land Services staff to a future meeting to discuss its role in catchment management.

Lindy Smith

1. Allow for movement of estuarine habitat with sea level rise.
2. Map freshwater wetlands.
3. Focus on river and ecosystems as an economic asset with determined value.

The committee discussed the economic value of the Tweed River and whether putting a value on it would assist in its future protection and promotion. Tom confirmed that the Gold Coast Waterways Authority completed such an assessment, which put a very high economic value on their natural assets. Such information could be used in underpinning grant applications and promoting the area.

Cr Nola Firth

1. Action E3 in the TRECMP - Motorised Water Recreation Business Policy.
2. Bray Park weir fish ladders. Confirmed by Jonathan that DPI Fisheries would condition an upgrade of the fish ladders in association with any works on the weir.

3. Water quality concerns around Condong and discharge from the Murwillumbah Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Marcelo Sano

1. Support for Council to complete the open coast Coastal Management Program and implement the Tweed River CMP.

The committee agreed for Tom to go through the list of priorities and see which ones are achievable and get back to the committee, before the next meeting, with a summary of priorities.

## **A2. NSW Department of Planning and Environment - Tweed River Water Quality Analysis**

NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) is undertaking work around the State looking at the impact of floods on water quality. Council has a water quality monitoring program and will use expertise of the DPE team to undertake a trends analysis on our data.

The NSW government is also reviewing water quality objectives. Ideally it would be useful to have water quality objectives that are specific to different river reaches reflecting the geology and other factors.

Based on the above, it has been advised that next year we will receive a detailed water quality analysis. The issue of whether Council should proceed with its community focused water quality report card, or wait for the State work, was discussed.

Tom suggested waiting for the State review report, then put it into a friendly format package for the public. Jane suggested that along with this we could include a projects update highlighting the priorities going forward. The committee agreed to this format. The above report is expected by June 2024.

## **A3. Fish Survey in the Tweed River- Possibilities for repeating the 1972 survey undertaken by the Littoral Society**

Cr Firth enquired whether it was possible to repeat the fish survey done in 1972 to see the comparison.

Jonathan noted there were guidelines for requesting DPI Fisheries to proceed with a research project. Solid justification would need to be put forward to the research team. This would include the reasons why the research was needed and the how the results would be used. Tom suggested to speak to Peter Comerford and look at using Citizen Science (using his divers) to approach this subject. Jane also suggested contacting Southern Cross University and seeing if there was any interest there.

## **A4. Hastings Point Management Plan - Project update and request for input**

Jordan gave a summary on the Hastings Point Management Plan.

Tender to go to consultants to prepare the management plan. Once the draft plan has been completed by the consultant it will be presented to the committee. From the committee the plan will be presented to Council.

A "Your Say Tweed" survey will be initiated in a few weeks. Jordan to send a link to the survey to the committee. Cr Cherry suggested early consultation with Hastings Point Marine Discovery Centre.

## **Outstanding Items:**

### **O1. Cobaki Lakes Saltmarsh Rehabilitation**

No further update.

# Minutes

## General Business:

### GB1. David Cranwell - Pottsville Community Assoc. enquires:

- The drain south of McKenzie Avenue runs into mangroves, resident concerns for stormwater flooding.
- Drain blockage – Coronation Avenue.

Tom to forward these concerns to the Roads and Stormwater Unit of Council.

## Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Minutes of the Tweed Coast and Waterways Advisory Committee Meeting Committee will be held **Wednesday 14 June 2023** at The South Sea Islander room, Tweed Heads Civic centre.

The meeting closed at 12.30pm

## EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S COMMENTS:

### A1. Tweed Coast and Waterways Committee - Priorities for the forthcoming term

Noted.

## EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS:

### A1. Tweed Coast and Waterways Committee - Priorities for the forthcoming term

That Council invites Janelle Saffin MP, Member for Lismore, to a Tweed Coast and Waterways Advisory Committee meeting to discuss the boat wake issue, riverbank erosion and the character zones proposed in the Tweed River Estuary Coastal Management Program.