

Minutes of the Tweed Coast and Waterways Committee Meeting held Wednesday 14 April 2021

Venue:

Hastings Point Marine Discovery Centre

Time:

9am

Present:

Cr Katie Milne; Rhonda James (Chair); David Cranwell; Jane Lofthouse ; Bill Hoskins; Tom Alletson; Lindy Smith; Bruce Peate; Hamish Brace; Robert Quirk; John Harbison; Peter Comerford; Sam Dawson; Frances Smith-Wright (Minutes).

Apologies:

Mayor Chris Cherry; Marama Hopkins; Tracey Stinson; Eli Szandala; Ian Burger; Carl Cormack; Ben Fitzgibbon; Jonathan Yantsch

Acknowledgement of the Bunjalung Nation**Minutes of Previous Meeting:**

Moved: Cr Katie Milne

Seconded: David Cranwell

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Committee meeting held 10 February 2021 be accepted as a true and accurate record of the proceedings of that meeting.

Prior to commencement of the meeting the committee was given a presentation of the history of the Marine Discovery Centre by Rhett Brambleby, outlining the uniqueness of the Hastings Point ecosystem and how the facility provides an educational and enlightening experience for schools and general public alike.

Discussion on threats to the rocky shore led to further discussion on the possibility of it becoming a Rocky Shore Protection Zone, or Aquatic Reserve. Tom gave some history of previous actions undertaken by Council and the Committee to try and assist bringing this about. The response on behalf of Minister Niall Blair in April 2018 noted that there were two marine parks and one aquatic reserve in the Tweed-Moreton bioregion that included significant areas of rocky shore. The response noted that there were no short-term processes planned to further review this bioregion.

The committee discussed with Rhett the necessity of developing a well-coordinated strategy and campaign, involving a coalition of locals and experts, if NSW Agencies were to be convinced to increase the level of protection for the Hastings Point rocky shore. A focus on the scientific and education values of the site may assist.

There was a query on the progress of the development of a management plan for the Hastings Point Headland. Tom and Jane advised that while Council had, through the TCWC minutes, acknowledged the need for such a project, it is still not currently resourced or initiated.

Business Arising:

BA1. Cudgen Creek Boat Ramp safety concerns (Kingscliff Ratepayers and Progress Association)

Meeting not yet held as previous date rained out.

BA2. Letter to NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment regarding saltmarsh rehabilitation at Leda site, Cobaki Broadwater.

Tom informed the committee that the letter had been sent to DPIE on 6 April but as yet there was no response.

Cr Katie Milne declared a non-significant, non-pecuniary interest in the Cobaki Broadwater issue due to previous legal matters with the chairman of Leda Holdings.

BA3. Waterways facilities – Boat ramp boom gates.

Tom advised that City of Gold Coast only have boom gates on the industrial / commercial use boat ramps. These were used to control contractor access with a permit system, but at no cost. It's possible that there are fee systems in place at private marinas. Brief enquiries with one LGA and one personal contact in South Australia revealed no boom gates or fees on public boat ramps.

BA4. Sea level rise projections

Robert initiated a discussion on sea level rise projections and Council's use of data in climate change risk assessment and management responses. Jane and Tom clarified that in most cases conservative values based on IPCC projections have been included in modelling of climate change impacts such as increased tide and flood levels and coastal erosion.

Agenda Items:

A1. Tweed Estuary Coastal Management Program update

CMP to go to July Council Meeting for adoption and then forwarded to the Minister for certification.

A2. Water Quality snapshot post La Nina and March rain events

Tom gave a presentation to the committee comparing 2020 and 2021 rainfall and water quality.

There have been a number of community observations that water quality appears to have been worse (by way of a visual assessment of 'muddiness') this year than previously recalled.

Looking over a six month period in both years and comparing turbidity and chlorophyll levels in various sections of the Tweed River estuary and Rous River, it was observed that in the upper estuary, median turbidity results were higher in 2021. It is impossible to say exactly why this has occurred, one reason (apart from total rainfall) could be frequency of rain events and re-suspension of fine sediments.

A3. Ecological Impact of Proposed Fishing Competition

Council were approached by a local business with a request for sponsorship of \$20,000 for a catch and release, 'green' recreational fishing competition. Due to concerns about the potential impact of the event on local marine life, Council requested the Tweed Coast and Waterways Committee to give advice on the potential ecological impact of the competition.

After extensive discussion the committee advised by way of a number of recommendations.

It was suggested that if Council decides to support the competition that it should encourage the organisers to run additional environmentally beneficial activities as part of the three day event, such as collecting fishing waste, validating the use of catch and release by competitors as well as putting a cap on the number of entrants to minimise impacts on the environment.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

That Council notes the potential ecological impacts of the proposed recreational fishing competition could include:

- **waste & litter**
- **sea bird entanglement and injury**
- **fish mortality**
- **pressure on boating facilities**
- **that while the event is promoted as catch and release, there may be no practical means of ensuring that this occurs**

Moved: Sam Dawson
Seconded: Peter Comerford

RECOMMENDATION 2:

The Tweed Coast and Waterways Committee recommends that Council does not allocate sponsorship funding to the proposed recreational fishing competition.

Moved: John Harbison
Seconded: David Cranwell

RECOMMENDATION 3:

That Council notes that the Tweed Coast Waterways Committee does not support the proposed recreational fishing competition.

Moved: John Harbison
Seconded: Bill Hoskins

A4. Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Grants – Waterways and Coastal Program Projects.

Federal Government have given Councils funding on a pro-rata basis with Tweed Shire Council receiving \$3.7 million.

Projects funded include:

\$430,000 – Repair canal revetment wall at Anchorage
\$500,000 – General repair works on waterways facilities
\$300,000 – Repair beach access ways
\$600,000 – Erosion stabilisation works on Tweed Valley Way including fish habitat features
\$100,000 – Koala fence repairs

There was discussion on stairs for river access for divers at Jack Evans Boat Harbour. A licence for the project has been sought from Crown lands. It was suggested that Geoff Provost could be approached with an enquiry on the progress of this Crown Lands license. Peter Comerford will follow up.

A5. Council Elections September

Jane suggested that with only two meetings left if there were any issues that needed to be brought to the attention of the committee to do so at the next meeting.

Jane indicated that the Terms of Reference would need refreshing and also possibly looking at any areas that were missing representation on the committee.

Action: Jane to send out to the committee “Tweed Coast and Waterways Committee Terms of Reference” for review.

General Business:

GB1. Tweed Coastal Management Plan

Jane discussed with the committee to bring forward the Recreational Access Plan for the Tweed Coast Estuaries ahead of other stages. Committee agreed with this as a priority project.

GB2. Cr Katie Milne informed the committee that the water strategies review has gone to Council and recommendation was to not proceed with Byrrell Creek Dam.

GB3. Rhonda suggested sending an email to the Hastings Point Marine Discovery Centre thanking them for our tour and congratulations on the refurbished facility.

Action: Tom to send email to Hastings Point Marine Centre

Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Tweed Coast and Waterways Committee will be held 9 June 2021.

The meeting closed at 12.10pm.

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM’S COMMENTS:

A3. Ecological Impact of Proposed Fishing Competition

Council should note the recommendation from the Waterways Committee in response to the deferred matter as per Council's Resolution 18 February 2021.

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS:

A3. Ecological Impact of Proposed Fishing Competition

1. That Council notes the potential ecological impacts of the proposed recreational fishing competition could include:
 - waste & litter
 - sea bird entanglement and injury
 - fish mortality
 - pressure on boating facilities
 - that while the event is promoted as catch and release, there may be no practical means of ensuring that this occurs
2. The Tweed Coast and Waterways Committee recommends that Council does not allocate sponsorship funding to the proposed recreational fishing competition.
3. That Council notes that the Tweed Coast Waterways Committee does not support the proposed recreational fishing competition.