

Minutes

Minutes of the Tweed Coast Koala Advisory Committee Meeting held Tuesday 5 December 2023

Venue:

The Hive, Murwillumbah Civic & Cultural Centre

Time:

2.00pm

Present:

Cr Meredith Dennis, Cr Nola Firth, Jenny Hayes, Rhonda James, Lorraine Vass, Irene Timmins, Scott Benitez Hetherington, Marama Hopkins, Brooke O'Dea.

Apologies:

Jo Green, Naomi Searle.

Minutes of Previous Meeting:

Moved: Lorraine Vass

Seconded: Meredith Dennis

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Tweed Coast Koala Advisory Committee meeting held Tuesday 5 September 2023 be accepted as a true and accurate record of the proceedings of that meeting.

Business Arising:

BA1. Scott to request that the funds are transferred to the Tweed Coast Koala Plan of Management (KPOM) habitat restoration job number – complete.

Agenda Items:

A1. Acknowledgement of Country

Marama acknowledged the Ngandowal and Minyungbul speaking people of the Bundjalung Country on whose land we work and learn and play.

A2. Council updates

A2.1 Habitat restoration

- Maintaining contracts awarded for current financial year, as well as consolidation and maintenance of works from previous year.
- Follow up weed control and maintenance is continuing at Beltana Drive, Duranbah, Tanglewood, and other longer-term sites.
- New sites at Beltana Drive and Cudgen Nature Reserve
- Site visit to Cudgen Nature Reserve with the NSW Department of Planning and Environment and Friends of the Koala. The purpose was to look at some older koala plantings at the site which has a long history of planting. All have been recorded under the Cudgen Nature Reserve project on the Atlas of Living Australia Restoration Hub.

A2.2 Clothiers Creek Road update

- Roads & Traffic Unit are implementing the council resolution with input from Sustainability & Environment Unit team.

- Meeting held with Qld Transport and Main Roads on 4 October.
- Request for speed zone reduction submitted to Transport for NSW 4 July 2023 – no response to date.
- Successful application submitted for 2 x Vehicle Activated Signs. Currently in procurement and completing site assessment for solar viability and installation.
- Working on securing surveyors to progress design options.
- Roads & Traffic and Sustainability & Environment Unit staff are discussing options for existing Variable Message Signage.
- Jenny noted that Team Koala community engagement in shopping centres shows significant support for mitigation action on Clothiers Creek Road, together with cynicism about anything being done.
- Marama shared recent traffic monitoring data showing that there has been a marked increase in drivers complying with the speed limit at standard monitoring location in 70km/h zone. New monitoring location in the 50km/h zone showed 76% drivers over the speed limit. Brooke noted that compliance generally reduces with lower speed limits.
- Noted that most contemporary koala sightings are at eastern end.

A3. Regional koala event fortnight & forum

- Marama shared latest planning information on the proposed 2024 koala forum, being developed by Northern Rivers Regional Koala Network and Partnership Group.
- 20 May to 1 June 2024
- To be a series of events across the 6 Northern Rivers LGAs culminating in forum event at Lismore (research and project outcomes etc.)
- Invitation for groups to identify proposed events to organise and host. Rhonda recommended a combined event at Pottsville. Ideas to be forwarded to Marama.
- Several planting / field visit events in development for Tweed.

A4. Koala Plan of Management review

- Marama gave an overview of the review process.
- Noted that in relation to the dog chapter, that there have been significant changes and progress with dog management that can be reflected in the KPOM review.
- Irene suggested that dog prohibition signs include the number / details for reporting non-compliance.
- Next 2 chapters to be determined and circulated in the new year.

A5. Virtual fencing

- Marama provided an overview of the information available about use of virtual fencing (reflector-style posts that emit a sound and lights on detection of vehicle headlights). Reasonably cheap, quick to install.
- Attended meetings with Southeast Queensland fauna infrastructure group, Northern Rivers Regional Koala Network, and Eurobodalla Council to obtain information on trials and success to date. No trials have targeted koalas – macropods and deer only. Current South Australia trial for koalas may provide some useful information, due for completion in 2024. Trials underway investigating various light/sound combinations on koala responses.

- Existing evidence shows that macropod and deer take notice, but not expected that koala response likely to be as beneficial.
- Heavy maintenance burden – hit by slashers and vehicles, ant infestations, vandalism.

A6. Key outcomes from the meeting

- Clothiers Creek Road project is gaining momentum, albeit slowly. Community strongly supportive based on Team Koala petitions.
- Koala Plan of Management review progress is positive, and the committee is supportive of the process.

General Business:

GB1. Koalas and domestic dogs on the Gold Coast

- Irene circulated information on recent City of Gold Coast local law about preventing dogs from injuring / killing koalas (August 2023). Maps provided to inform community. Compliance requirements significant.
- Marama noted that NSW Local Government legislation doesn't have provision to make local laws.
- Are there opportunities to follow up on this matter with the Koala Plan of Management review?

GB2. Kings Forest update

- Jenny requested information on Kings Forest development compliance.
- Scott noted that weekly reports are provided by development engineering representative and that council officers are maintaining oversight of development compliance.

GB3. Tweed Coast Koala Study final report

- Lorraine thanked Marama for the report.
- Marama noted that we are due to repeat Tweed Coast monitoring in 2024.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Tweed Coast Koala Advisory Committee will be held in 2024. Proposed dates to be circulated.

The meeting closed at 3.35pm.

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S COMMENTS:

Nil

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS:

Nil