

Minutes of the Tweed Coast Koala Advisory Committee Meeting held Tuesday 7 March 2023

Venue:

Mt Warning Meeting Room, Tweed Shire Council, Murwillumbah

Time:

2.30 pm

Present:

Cr Meredith Dennis, Simon Dawson, Rhonda James, Lorraine Vass, Irene Timmins, Scott Benitez Hetherington, Marama Hopkins, Joanne Green.

Apologies:

Jenny Hayes.

Acknowledgement of Country

Marama opened the meeting with an Acknowledgement of Country

Minutes of Previous Meeting:

Moved: Lorraine Vass

Seconded: Rhonda James

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Tweed Coast Koala Advisory Committee meeting held Tuesday 25 October 2022 be accepted as a true and accurate record of the proceedings of that meeting.

Business Arising:

BA1. Committee discussed and agreed to remove paper road action (BA1) from earlier committee minutes

BA2. Action for Scott to follow up with finance regarding koala donations made to date (BA2) is retained.

Agenda Items:

A1. Habitat restoration status update

Jo provided an update on habitat restoration actions:

- Plantings funded through Tweed Coast Koala Plan of Management (KPOM) and two NSW Department of Planning & Environment (DPE) programs ('shovel ready' and habitat restoration).
- Current work underway at 3 properties at Duranbah, 3 properties at Pottsville, Cudgerie Reserve.
- Work at Beltana Drive, Bilambil progressing very well.
- 10,000 trees will be planted in current financial year.
- Working with regional koala project officer to plan for involvement in regional habitat restoration programs.
- Rhonda noted that other programs (eg. International Fund for Animal Welfare) are also active in the Tweed.

A2. Habitat Restoration Hub update

Marama provided the following update:

- Habitat restoration hub is being widely used now with 24 projects eg. Northern Rivers koala habitat restoration, NSW flying-fox habitat restoration program.
- 105 users across 38 organisations contributing data, including across NSW and into QLD.
- Forms for entry of follow-up work and monitoring data are in preparation.

A3. Regional koala conservation actions update

Marama provided the following update:

- Consultants and regional koala officer are finalising the Regional Koala Conservation Strategy, after extensive rounds of feedback from all councils and other stakeholders.
- Regional koala activity survey final report received and being reviewed, prior to distribution.
- Regional koala communications project workshops upcoming – scheduled for 23 March to discuss and agree on key messages.

A4. Koala Plan of Management review - communications

Committee members were asked to consider the following prior to the meeting and share their findings and feedback with the group.

1. How did you/your organisation share the outcomes of previous meeting?
 - Simon – Jenny reported committee meeting at Team Koala monthly meeting; discussions with community members at Pottsville Markets (reduced level of engagement at recent markets noted). Difficult to get depth of engagement.
 - Irene – used facebook community groups to request feedback on KPOM outcomes. There are leaders in the community with interest apparent. Requests included:
 - more engagement with Council (suggest presentation/info sessions from Council on what is being done),
 - information on the various koala-related groups / organisations / committees and what their roles are,
 - more information on what happens to koalas after rescues.Individual property owners' issues also raised (eg. request for more fencing on the highway).
 - Rhonda – Friends of Koala (FOK) using facebook and instagram to provide individual animal stories. Reported low level of interest beyond general interest, which is hard to convert to taking actions that make a difference.
 - An overarching concern from committee members was the need to convert interest from community members into action for koala conservation.
2. Find and share examples of other successful communications that may be applicable to the KPOM. Suggestions and discussion from the group included:
 - Short video clips / stories – potential to promote through Council's social media channels.
 - A variety of formats needed for effective communications.
 - Consider showing prior to movies at Regent / Hoyts.
 - Information is already out there, need to identify strategies to help community access it and promote key messages.
 - Need to use different techniques / strategies (entertaining, informative, shocking, humour).
 - Promote all activities including tree planting.
 - Community days to facilitate discussions.
 - Need to engage with an intent to act.

A5. Update on Clothiers Creek Road resolution

Scott provided a summary of the progress of this project:

- initial conservation values assessment, environmental impact analysis and options report: *completed*
- traffic engineering assessment: *to be completed*
- development and implementation of community consultation program: *to be completed*
- consultation with Local Traffic Committee: *to be completed*
- identify and secure funding for construction: *to be completed*

Minutes

Progress slowed by limited staff resource and competing priorities. Scott noted that preliminary discussions with DPE regarding potential funding opportunities have commenced and that there may be some potential for funding through the NSW Koala Strategy.

A6. Key outcomes and messages from the meeting

- Clothiers Creek Road traffic management is urgent and highly important.
- Regional scale actions are positive and receiving updates on these is beneficial.
- Effective community engagement is critical to establishing and maintaining community interest and commitment.

General Business:

Nil.

Next Meeting: Tuesday 6 June 2023.

The meeting closed at 4.00pm.

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S COMMENTS:

Nil.

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS:

Nil.