

# Minutes

## **Minutes of the Tweed Coast Koala Advisory Group Committee Meeting held Tuesday 14 February 2012**

### **Venue:**

Canvas and Kettle Room - Murwillumbah

### **Time:**

12:30 pm

### **Present:**

Cr Dot Holdom (TSC), Steve Jensen (DoP-arrived at 1.15pm), Lorraine Vass (Friends of Koala Inc.), Ralph Kraemer (community rep), Anita Mudge (community rep), Rhonda James (community rep); Mark Kingston (TSC), Sally Jacka (TSC), Sandy Pimm (TSC), Steve Philips (Biolink).

### **Apologies:**

John Turbill (OEH), Simon Graham (community rep), Jennifer Hayes (Team Koala Inc).

## **1. Minutes of Previous Meeting:**

**Moved:** Anita Mudge

**Seconded:** Rhonda James

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Tweed Coast Koala Advisory Group Committee meeting held Tuesday 29 November 2011 be accepted as a true and accurate record of the proceedings of that meeting (subject to adoption at next Council meeting).

## **BUSINESS ARISING:**

### **2. Endangered Population Nomination**

The draft nomination has been finalised and was circulated to members for consideration prior to the meeting. Comments raised by members included minor grammatical corrections; format/sequencing suggestions and the need for a press release once the nomination has been submitted.

Steve Phillips suggested that in his opinion, sufficient data exists to include the Byron Shire Koala population within the listing nomination. The Advisory Group agreed that it would be worthwhile expanding the area to include the area east of the Pacific Highway between the Tweed and Brunswick Rivers (assuming little additional work or time delay is required) and that the nomination could be re-named the Tweed/Brunswick coast population.

Mark will liaise with Steve in regard to the detailed review of the nomination prior to any further action.

### **3. Koala Connections Project**

Sally provided an update on the project:

Difficulties have been encountered with weather and one site not slashed for planting, thus requiring re-programming. Two additional landholder have joined the project at Round Mountain such that, with 3 other possible properties, a good corridor connection will be obtained. The project will benefit from other proposals and funding applications at the Cudgen Nature Reserve “banana paddock” which is now showing good regeneration, and Pottsville Environment Park grant-funded works.

#### **4. Kings Forest Koala Plan of Management**

Mark requested feedback on the Council submission to the Department of Planning and Infrastructure. Specific questions were raised about methods to manage impacts during the construction period (e.g. fencing) and the deletion of the on-road fauna crossing; however, there was general agreement with the report as submitted.

#### **5. Community representative Simon Graham**

Simon was contacted due to ongoing absences. Simon advised that he is not available for the current meeting times and would like to resign from the committee. The Advisory Group considered whether a replacement should be sought. It was agreed that due to the substantial “catch-up” required, the imminence of the draft KPoM and because the current committee will be disbanded in favour of an implementation committee should the KPoM be adopted, that no further nominations be sought.

**Moved:** Cr Holdom

**Seconded:** Lorraine Vass

**RESOLVED** that the Tweed Coast Koala Advisory Group accept the resignation of community representative Simon Graham and that, due to the limited remaining time-frame, the position not be replaced on the current committee.

#### **6. Koala fence on Tweed Coast Road**

The poor condition of the fence has been assessed and problem areas noted, with photographs taken. A meeting has been scheduled with Council’s Maintenance Engineer for next week. It is likely that some areas of the fence will be moved to avoid ongoing problems with proximity to vegetation and that a separate job number will be sought to isolate fence maintenance from other road jobs.

The issue of fencing along the Pacific Highway was then raised as ‘handover’ works by highway maintenance contractors found problems, including a Koala outside the fence at Eviron. Sally will write to the TRMS (formerly RTA) with regard to the need for regular ongoing maintenance and the possibility of an independent contractor to assess maintenance effort to ensure it is regular and ongoing.

#### **CORRESPONDENCE IN:**

No correspondence received since last meeting.

## **AGENDA ITEMS:**

### **7. Update on TCKPOM**

The draft Tweed Coast Koala Plan of Management (TCKPoM) is nearing completion (95%) and is expected to be received within the next 2-4 weeks. Discussion centred on the necessity of 'tough' provisions if the Koala population is to be saved (e.g. 360ha of Koala habitat restored over the next ten years), the need for 'marketing' of the plan and the suitable timing of same. Steve Jensen used the Lismore example as a good plan which is very planning focussed but missed the opportunity to fully explain and educate the general public so as to 'take them along'.

Nothing in SEPP 44 requires public exhibition, however, it is considered that the community would expect consultation. The form, timing and key stakeholders/audiences need to be considered now.

Resolved that Council staff bring along to the next meeting an outline of a Communication Strategy and a draft task timeline for the consultation and exhibition period that would cater for the draft plan being reported to Council by July 2012.

### **8. LPMA Supermarket proposal - Pottsville**

Recent Council survey and advice showed major constraints associated with the larger supermarket proposal on this Crown land site (on Cudgera Creek behind the current IGA supermarket). Constraints include relatively high Koala usage centred on Swamp Mahoganies as well as an endangered ecological community. The proposal is understood to have been withdrawn.

### **9. Fire and Biodiversity Consortium Koala Working Group**

John Turnbull (TSC) and Alan Goodwin (OEH) have been instrumental in achieving a cohesive group of relevant bushfire and public authority staff representing the northern rivers region in order to include a focus on the Koala in bushfire planning. Some difficulties have arisen in getting the group together regularly but a scoping paper is currently being worked on to address Koala and bushfire issues across the north coast. It is likely the Tweed Coast KPoM outcomes and methods will be used and broadened out to apply to the entire northern rivers area.

### **10. Biodiversity Fund grant application**

A grant has been sought under this scheme which focuses on carbon sequestration outcomes. The application has been submitted jointly with Byron Shire and seeks \$2.2 million over 4 years to plant approximately 200ha of Koala habitat and to undertake bushland regeneration within existing Koala habitat and threatened Ecological Communities over a 25 ha area. It is recognised that the application will need to compete with others in the western districts which can use mechanical plantings methods to reduce costs, however, high growth rates on the north coast should ensure competitive results. Grant application results are expected in late March/early April.

## **GENERAL BUSINESS:**

### **11. NSW Environmental trust grant**

An expression of interest has been submitted under the Research Grant program for research into koala population and distribution and corridor requirements, eg. specific widths; distance between fragments, bushfire management etc. as Community surveys will complement the study.

### **12. SEPP 44 process**

Steve Jensen requested that the draft KPoM be forwarded in a formal capacity to the Grafton office of the DoPI (Steve Murray) well prior to exhibition so that sufficient time is available for the department to check the plan against all SEPP 44 matters. Steve again cited the Lismore example where the plan was on exhibition prior to DoPI being given a copy.

### **Next Meeting:**

To be confirmed.

The next meeting of the Tweed Coast Koala Advisory Group Committee was tentatively set for Thursday 22 March at 1:30 PM in the Canvas and Kettle Room, Murwillumbah Civic Centre. The date will depend on the status of the draft KPoM and will be advised prior to 22<sup>nd</sup>.

The meeting closed at 3.40pm.

## **EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S COMMENTS:**

Nil.

## **EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Nil.