

**BIODIVERSITY IN HIGH COUNTRY URBAN COMMUNITIES – MEETING HELD AT  
THE ARMIDALE DUMARESQ COUNCIL CHAMBERS – TUESDAY, 23 DECEMBER  
2008  
A08/4305 (ADC Reference)**

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**PRESENT:** David Steller, Euan Belson, Kevin Abey, Richard Morsley and Zoe White (Armidale Dumaresq Council), Bruce Whan and Angus Adair (Armidale Urban River Care Group), Tom O'Connor, Warren Sellings, Nanette Lamrock and Robert Bell (Uralla Council), Paul Berdar (New England Livestock Health and Pest Authority), Jackie Bowe (SNELCC), Bob Furze (Guyra Council), Mark Ingram (DECC – NPWS), Jo Leoni (Sustainable Living Armidale), Brett Maunder (New England Credit Union), Steve McCoy and Gerry Moran (Walcha Council), Judith McNeill (Institute for Rural Futures, UNE), Rodney O'Brien (Department of Lands), Bill Perrottet (Malpas Catchment Group), Julian Prior (Ecosystem Management – UNE) and Kath Wray (Citizens Wildlife Corridors).

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Margaret Schumacher (Armidale Dumaresq Council)

**TELEPHONE CONFERENCE LINK:** Adam Blakester (Private Consultant, Paradigm Play) and Susen Smith (UNE – Declaration Implementation Committee)

**ITEM 1**

**APOLOGIES:** Patsy Asch and Bar Finch (Sustainable Living Armidale), Steve Gow (Armidale Dumaresq Council), M Batt (Uralla Rivercare Group), David Cushway (Guyra Council), Carol Davies (UNE Talloires Group), Kevin Dupe (New England Credit Union), Luc Fargo (Borders Rivers Gwydir CMA), Vivienne Nano (TAFE) and Sonia Williams (SNELCC).

Mr Steller welcomed representatives from the organisations to the meeting and requested everyone to introduce themselves and their organisation for the benefit of all in attendance.

**ITEM 1**

**CORRESPONDENCE**

D Steller reported on Incoming Correspondence relating to the Grant Application:

**1.1 Carmel Tebutt MP**

**Deputy Premier and Minister for Climate Change and the Environment and Minister for Commerce**

Letter (dated 3 December 2008) advising that the Environmental Trust has approved a grant of \$2 Million for the Biodiversity in High Country Urban Communities project under the Urban Sustainability (Major Projects) and subject to certain conditions.

**1.2 John Street**

**Senior Project Officer – Urban Sustainability Program, Department of Environment and Climate Change**

Email (dated 16 December 2008) offering congratulations on the successful application to Round 3 of the Urban Sustainability Program (USP), for the project number 2008/USM/0023, titled Biodiversity in High Country Urban Communities.

J Street advised that when assessing the application, the USP Technical Committee recommended it for support with the following conditions:

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1. Restoration must occur within urban areas.
2. Timetable and resources to be measurable over the three year program.
3. Further details required re educational and Monitoring and Evaluation components.
4. Analysis of existing educational material.
5. Contextualisation of existing programs and grants.

In addition to the above conditions, the Trust Administration request that the following matters be addressed by 1<sup>st</sup> February 2009:

Section C - Financial Information:

- 1(g) Insurance. Confirm that the public liability and volunteers insurance needed for the project are not already covered by councils existing policies.
- 2(a) Project General Administration Costs. Provide details for the \$186,480 costs for Administration Auspicing by NESAC.
- Link project to the 2008/USM/0037 project by Tweed & Byron Shires, Improving Urban & Peri-Urban Bushland Sustainability.
- Minimise the need for car transport.

Mr Prior asked for a definition of urban areas given one of the projects in Guyra falls outside the urban area.

**Action: Mr Steller to obtain a definition of “urban areas” from the NSW Environmental Trust**

Mr Steller advised that he had spoken to Mark Kingston, Biodiversity Program Leader from Tweed Shire Council regarding their project and circulated a summary of the Tweed Byron Bush Futures – Improving Urban and Peri-urban Bushland Sustainability in Tweed and Byron Shires

*“This project will achieve, through on ground works and extension, the sustainable management of a number of State and regionally significant urban and peri-urban bushland (and wetland) areas on the NSW far north coast. On ground works will focus on habitat protection and restoration, management of stormwater pollution and erosion, removal of rubbish, pest species management and interpretive works. Priority sites will be selected on the basis of a comprehensive audit of management issues and requirements. The audit will also be designed to facilitate the selection of sites beyond the scope of the project. A major focus of the project will be a community and institutional engagement campaign aimed at promoting sustainable management solutions by linking issues at the urban bushland interface with the full range of sustainability issues faced by modern urban communities.”*

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Mr Steller advised that Tweed and Bryon Councils were in the process of setting up a Steering Committee.

**Action: Mr Steller to liaise with Mr Kingston regarding the linking of the two projects.**

**1.3 Bernie Robinson**

**Grants Administrator, Urban Sustainability Programs, NSW Environmental Trust**

Email (dated 23 December 2008) forwarding copy of the Grant Agreement and letter from Peter Dixon, Manager Environmental Funding Programs.

Mr Steller circulated copies of the Grant Agreement for notation and discussion.

**ITEM 2**

**BIODIVERSITY IN HIGH COUNTRY URBAN COMMUNITIES PROJECT**

Mr Steller opened the meeting to discussion on the Biodiversity in High Country Urban Communities Project.

He advised that a copy of the Grant Application would be forwarded to all contacts on the Contact List.

**Action: Copy of Grant Application to be forwarded by email to all contacts on the Contact list compiled by Mrs Schumacher.**

**Grant Agreement**

A question was raised by Mr Moran concerning the Grant Agreement and Armidale Dumaresq Council as the recipient of the funding when the Application was lodged by New England Strategic Alliance of Councils (NESAC). In particular financial control needed to be shared amongst the NESAC member Councils.

It was confirmed that Armidale Dumaresq Council was nominated as the contact for administrative issues and the General Manager of Armidale Dumaresq Council, Mr Shane Burns had signed the Grant Application in his position as the Chair of the 'Directorate' of NESAC.

**Action: Mr Steller to query with the NSW Environmental Trust whether it was possible to modify the Grant Agreement for the five Councils (NESAC) to sign the Grant Agreement.**

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**Priorities/Actions to Start Project**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Action Required</b>	<b>By When</b>
Grant Agreement	• Signed	22 January 2009
Steering Committee	• Committee Formed with Nominated first representative and alternative representative	February 2009
Partnership Agreement		March 2009
Business Plan		March 2009
Project Officer	• Position Description	January 2009
	• Advertising for Appointment	April 2009

**10.40am Adam Blakester ended Telephone Conference Call**

The following is an extract from an email sent by Adam Blakester following the meetingL

*“One area I feel is key is how we integrate this project with the other sustainability initiatives across NESAC (SLEX, Wildlife Corridors, Sustainability Strategy, SLA, TAFE Sustainability Certificate, Climate Change Adaptation, etc).*

*This integration will contribute to several USP KPIs such as:  
Number of organisations engaged*

*Number of individuals reached by communication/ dissemination strategy*

*Number of visitors to key sites*

*Visitor Centre Enquiries  
Value of Publicity Generated*

*I see this as much about integrating communications (web, media, perhaps even a 'Sustainable New England' brand) as well as the donations/funding (NECU foundation) and volunteering.”*

**Steering Committee**

The meeting discussed the role of the Steering Committee and representation from the five Councils.

S McCoy advised that representation from the New England Weeds Authority on the Steering Committee was not necessary.

Mr Steller suggested that the role of the Steering Committee would be to action the priorities to commence the project, administer the grant and financial implications, ensure the projects run to schedule, give direction to the Advisory Committee and report outcomes to NESAC.

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It was agreed that a Steering Committee comprising of five to six representatives be formed with representatives from the four Councils, SNELCC and the University of New England.

Minutes from the Steering Committee are to be circulated to the Advisory Committee for notation.

A question was raised regarding conflict of interests by members of the Steering Committee.

Mr Steller advised that decisions made by the Steering Committee would be based on recommendations of funding and development priorities as recommended by the Program Manager.

He suggested that individual persons and groups should be aware of any pecuniary (financial) issues and declare an interest where applicable.

It was envisaged that the Steering Committee meet on a fortnightly basis and then monthly as the project progresses.

The Steering Committee will work with the Project Manager with the aim of obtaining positive outcomes and developing projects in consultation with the Advisory Committee, Project Manager and negotiation with land holders.

Decisions would be made together building on past, current and future projects on issues that included and involved community education and awareness, social capital, evaluation and monitoring and land tenure.

The question was raised regarding Secretarial/Administration support for the Steering Committee. Mr Steller advised that NESAC had committed In Kind Support and that this support would be supplied by the Councils as part of the In Kind contribution.

A Chairperson of the Steering Committee is to be nominated at the meeting on the 14 January 2009.

**Action:**

**Letters be forwarded to the General Managers of the five Councils, the Chair of SNELCC (Sonia Williams), the University of New England (via Julian Prior) requesting them to nominate a representative and an alternate representative to attend the Steering Committee Meetings and advise that the first meeting will be held at 10.00am on Wednesday, 14 January 2009 in the Armidale Dumaresq Council First Floor Committee Room.**

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**Advisory Committee**

The Advisory Committee was to include representatives from Government bodies, New England Credit Union, Schools and industry partners with the first meeting scheduled for Wednesday, 28 January 2009 at 11.00am in the Armidale Dumaresq First Floor Committee Room.

**Action: Emails to be forwarded to “Contact List” inviting them to nominate a representative and an alternate representative to attend the Advisory Committee Meetings to be held at 10.00am on Wednesday, 28 January 2009 in the Armidale Dumaresq Council First Floor Committee Room.**

**Ongoing Maintenance of Projects**

Bruce Whan raised a concern regarding the ongoing maintenance of the project as being a key issue of responsibility and questioned if part of the Grant Funding was available to be put aside for ongoing maintenance.

Mr Steller advised that the Grant Funding was for the projects and that the maintenance was a separate issue to be considered by the Councils and responsible groups.

**10.55am Bruce Whan left meeting.**

**11.00am Susen Smith ended Telephone Conference call.**

Nanette Lamrock presented a short summary of the Uralla Project.

The meeting closed at 11.15am

Mr D Steller  
**Acting Coordinator**