

**NESAC AND WALCHA COUNCIL - BIODIVERSITY IN HIGH COUNTRY URBAN COMMUNITIES – STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT THE URALLA SHIRE COUNCIL CHAMBERS – WEDNESDAY, 17 JUNE 2009  
A08/4305 (ADC Reference)**

**PRESENT:** Tom O'Connor (Chairperson and Uralla Shire Council), Jackie Bowe (Project Director – Southern New England Landcare Ltd (SNEL)), Robyn Bartel (UNE – Talloires), Sonia Williams (SNELCC), David Steller (Armidale Dumaresq Council), Kate Boyd (Armidale Tree Group), Gerry Moran (Walcha Council), Bob Furze (Guyra Shire Council), Alice Devlin (SNELCC).

**ITEM 1**

**APOLOGIES:** nil.

**ITEM 2**

**CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**Motion:** That the Minutes of the Steering Committee Meeting held on 13 May 2009 be confirmed as a true and correct record.

**MOVED** Bob Furze, **SECONDED** David Steller, **CARRIED.**

**ITEM 3**

**DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Nil.

**ITEM 4**

**MATTERS ARISING**

**4.1 Linking websites – Walcha and Guyra Websites**

G Moran informed the Committee that was still to follow up on this action. B Furze informed Committee that Leonie Cox was working on this for Guyra.

**Action:** Links to be completed, J Bowe to check progress

**4.2 Changes to Terms of Reference – Steering Committee**

T O'Connor advised that Kate Boyd and Rodney O'Brien had been added as the Advisory Committee representatives on the Committee List, Item 5 on the Terms of Reference. Jackie Bowe had also been added as Project Director and point of contact for Meetings.

**Motion:** Accept changes

**MOVED** Bob Furze **SECONDED** David Steller **CARRIED.**

**4.3 Draft Terms of Reference – Advisory Committee (AC)**

J Bowe sent out a copy with the AC notice and comments were received relating to functions of the committee. There was no discussion of the Draft when the item was briefly mentioned at the AC Meeting. Due to time over-run at that meeting J Bowe told the AC that comments would be received by email.

**NESAC AND WALCHA COUNCIL - BIODIVERSITY IN HIGH COUNTRY URBAN COMMUNITIES – STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT THE URALLA SHIRE COUNCIL CHAMBERS – WEDNESDAY, 17 JUNE 2009  
A08/4305 (ADC Reference)**

J Bowe told the committee that some comments had already been received by email before the AC meeting relating to the communication role and membership of the AC.

G Moran queried the role of AC members in relation to making statements to the media. This was discussed by the Committee.

R Bartel suggested the communication role of the AC be detailed in the communication strategy.

K Boyd suggested a process of approval of media releases, to be included in the communications strategy.

<b>Action:</b> J Bowe to include AC roles in the communication strategy
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J Bowe raised the issue that currently, section 5. Membership does not include community groups and names some State Agencies but misses others. The following wording was suggested for Membership:

“The Committee shall comprise of representatives of the project partners and stakeholders including, community groups, government agencies, schools, the university, TAFE, New England Credit Union and industry Partners.”

T O’Connor suggested also including “interested people” “Government agencies”.

J Bowe advised that she had updated the Meetings section to include SNEL as a contact for the Steering Committee..

<b>Action:</b> J Bowe to amend and circulate the AC Draft Terms of Reference to the AC via email.
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#### **4.4 Purchasing Guidelines for the Project**

T O’Connor advised that purchasing guidelines for the Project need to be established. These would outline that monies payable to SNEL would be handled by Armidale Dumaresq Council. Purchasing needs to be within established Council guidelines.

D Steller confirmed that Armidale Dumaresq Council have discussed purchasing arrangements with SNEL and that payment mechanisms to SNEL have been established.

S Williams reminded the Committee of the Trust requirement that purchases over the threshold value of \$5000 require a process with quotations.

T O’Connor suggested that SNEL should use an expression of interest process to short list businesses from which quotes will be received.

The letter of appointment to SNEL as Project Director from Armidale Dumaresq Council is completed, but is yet to be delivered.

**NESAC AND WALCHA COUNCIL - BIODIVERSITY IN HIGH COUNTRY URBAN COMMUNITIES – STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT THE URALLA SHIRE COUNCIL CHAMBERS – WEDNESDAY, 17 JUNE 2009  
A08/4305 (ADC Reference)**

**Action:** J Bowe to follow up to obtain purchasing guidelines from Armidale Dumaresq Council. SNEL to develop an expression of interest process to short list businesses.

**Action:** D Steller to deliver letter of appointment to SNEL.

**4.5 Records Management with ADC System**

D Steller informed the Committee that the Project has been loaded onto TRIM to provide access to any file. All correspondence will go to D Steller, who will in turn forward via email to J Bowe. D Steller will form the primary contact for the Environment Trust.

**4.6 Information to be Shared with Namoi ROC**

G Moran advised that J Bowe's contact details have been forwarded.

**4.7 USSA Workshop and Attendance**

**4.7a** Environmental Trust cluster meeting to be held in Parramatta on 18 June 2009. D Steller spoke to Elizabeth Lechlein and informed her that due to time restraints, rather than cost, the Project Director would be unable to attend.

Regionalised meetings are scheduled to be held every 6 months. Details of which will be advised to J Bowe, who will attend the relevant meetings.

**Action:** J Bowe will attend cluster meeting via teleconference on 18 June 2009 and will obtain dates and locations for regionalised meetings.

**4.7b** The Urban Sustainability Support Alliance workshop will take place in November, with J Bowe scheduled to attend.

**4.8 Appointment of Advisory Committee representative and alternative on the Steering Committee**

J Bowe advised the Committee that the selection process was completed at the Advisory Committee meeting. K Boyd and Rodney O'Brien were confirmed as representative and alternate representative respectively.

T O'Connor welcomed K Boyd to the Steering Committee.

**4.9 Meeting of the Advisory Committee (item 6.5)**

Committee members were asked to peruse the minutes of the Advisory Committee meeting.

**Motion:** Note and refer minutes to Project Director in developing the Business Plan.

**MOVED** G Moran, **SECONDED** K Boyd, **CARRIED.**

**4.10 Guyra Projects (item 5.1)**

**NESAC AND WALCHA COUNCIL - BIODIVERSITY IN HIGH COUNTRY URBAN COMMUNITIES – STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT THE URALLA SHIRE COUNCIL CHAMBERS – WEDNESDAY, 17 JUNE 2009  
A08/4305 (ADC Reference)**

Committee referred to item 5.1, an email from Ben Harris (Guyra Shire Council) outlining some project ideas for Guyra.

T O'Connor tables a compilation of project priorities from the Uralla Sub-catchment plan.

G Moran queried the process of submitting project ideas for the project.

J Bowe identified that Guyra is unique as there has been little Council or community input, rather there has simply been the Uradangie wetlands project proposed by Armidale Dumaresq Council. For this reason in Guyra and similarly in Walcha, key members of the community will be contacted to develop the projects in those towns. These written submissions at this stage form part of the process.

S Williams indicated that a part of the proposal was for meetings to be held with the appropriate sectors of the community in each of the four urban areas and from this, projects would be forthcoming.

The Committee discussed how proposals will fit in with Grant objectives.

D Steller suggested the need for there to be a scientific basis for all proposals, to ensure that promotion of a project is not based on anecdotal evidence as opposed to scientific. This was agreed to by all Committee members.

The process for prioritising and choosing which projects will be included in the Grant was discussed. It was agreed by the Committee that project priorities need to be determined within each town before they are decided upon and funds divided between the four towns.

J Bowe suggested that a technical panel will be formed to devise a protocol on how to do this.

<b>Action:</b> J Bowe make contact with key contacts in Guyra and Walcha where projects are at an earlier stage of development and provide appropriate assistance.
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**4.11 Letters of appreciation to Margaret Schumacher and John McKinnon**

Letters have been written and forwarded to Margaret Schumacher and John McKinnon.

**4.12 Travel expenses reimbursement for Robyn Bartel**

R Bartel was reimbursed for travel expenses from the meeting on 13 May 2009.

The committee discussed the use of Grant funds for administration purposes, such as attending Steering Committee meetings. It was decided that this would be further discussed between Council members.

The need to possibly review the allocation of \$186,480 for administration was discussed (item 6.1). An email and budget justification covering all expenses for the period for the Business Plan development and the administration expenses for

**NESAC AND WALCHA COUNCIL - BIODIVERSITY IN HIGH COUNTRY  
URBAN COMMUNITIES – STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT THE  
URALLA SHIRE COUNCIL CHAMBERS – WEDNESDAY, 17 JUNE 2009  
A08/4305 (ADC Reference)**

the life of the grant was prepared by SNEL and approved by the Steering Committee and sent to the Trust. S Williams advised the Committee that this allocation was simply an indicative justification of the funds and the money allocated to administrative purposes should be viewed as a maximum with a preference for reducing administrative cost and returning more funds to the main project activities wherever possible. Money identified for administration can always easily be returned to other parts of the project if it was not required, however it is never easy to do this in reverse, hence it is better to over estimate from the beginning.

<b>Action:</b> D Steller to discuss the use of Grant administration funds with other Council reps.
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**ITEM 5**

**CORRESPONDENCE**

**5.1 Incoming: Email from Ben Harris, Guyra Shire Council, regarding projects to be considered for the Grant**

Refer to 4.10.

**5.2 Outgoing: Email to Elizabeth Lechlein and Kellie Walters from the Trust regarding budgeting and other information requested by the Trust (item 6.1)**

Refer to 4.12.

**ITEM 6**

**ADMINISTRATION**

**Reply to information requested by the Trust**

Refer to 4.12

**ITEM 7**

**PROJECT DIRECTORS REPORT**

**7.1 Recruitment of project support staff**

A Devlin recruited as Project Assistant.

**7.2 NESAC Induction**

TRIMing and purchasing processes are being organised between J Bowe and D Steller.

T O'Connor raised the issue of OHS and how this will be addressed.

J Bowe advised that OHS issues will be included in the Business Plan. Assistance will be sought from other organisations who have already undertaken the same Grant in how they approached OHS considerations.

**NESAC AND WALCHA COUNCIL - BIODIVERSITY IN HIGH COUNTRY URBAN COMMUNITIES – STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT THE URALLA SHIRE COUNCIL CHAMBERS – WEDNESDAY, 17 JUNE 2009  
A08/4305 (ADC Reference)**

T O'Connor brought to the attention of the committee a recent case where failure to communicate the policy to those on site had led to a claim being successfully made against an organisation, and he reminded the Committee of the importance of not only having policies but a process was needed to communicate these policies to individuals as they enter project sites.

**Action:** J Bowe to ask about risk assessment and OHS policies at Environmental Trust cluster meeting on 18 June 2009 and will include these in the Business Plan.

**7.3 Communication Strategy**

A name for the Grant was not decided upon at the Advisory Committee meeting. J Bowe suggested forming a reference group to develop a communications strategy. Karen Zirkler and Adam Blakester have been asked and it would be advisable to involve someone from NESAC/Walcha as well as Rosemary Mort.

A meeting of this group would be held the following week.

R Bartel suggested also involving Darren Ryder or Carol Davies from UNE.

**Action:** J Bowe to contact potential representatives, develop the communication strategy and begin implementation.

**7.4 Advisory Committee Meeting**

The main themes that evolved from the Advisory Committee meeting were to build on works already being done, increase communication between the four towns, increase ideas sharing between groups, increase community ownership and participation, and maintain and continue works into the future. When considering the sizeable nature of the Grant, a significant impact should be visible at the completion. Diverse and different approaches were needed between the four towns.

Project strategies were discussed.

J Bowe advised that there is now enough material to begin putting the Business Plan together.

**Action:** Town meetings of Advisory Committee members to take place during July to assist with the development of the business plan.

**7.5 Contract with UNE**

J Bowe met with R Bartel, Darren Ryder and Carol Davies and discussed a two phase agreement. The first phase being development of the Business Plan and the second being the implementation of project ideas.

D Ryder will provide proposal to include monitoring and evaluation, and aspects of education.

**Action:** J Bowe to continue liaison with UNE to finalise the UNE contract.

**NESAC AND WALCHA COUNCIL - BIODIVERSITY IN HIGH COUNTRY  
URBAN COMMUNITIES – STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT THE  
URALLA SHIRE COUNCIL CHAMBERS – WEDNESDAY, 17 JUNE 2009  
A08/4305 (ADC Reference)**

**7.6 Business Plan Development**

The Advisory Committee now has a good awareness of the time frame required. Ideas for the process of how to develop the Business Plan were collated at the Advisory Committee meeting. The need to develop a vision for the Grant was discussed.

J Bowe highlighted the need to link the Business Plan to Local and State Government plans. This will be achieved by liaising with Local Government and CMAs about State and Federal Government plans.

S Williams drew the Committee's attention to the budget sheets for year 1.

<p><b>Motion:</b> Go forward with the budget proposal for the Business Plan Development <b>MOVED</b> D Steller      <b>SECONDED</b> G Moran      <b>CARRIED.</b></p>
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<p><b>Action:</b> J Bowe to work with D Ryder to develop a form to start collating the information which needs to be gathered for the Business Plan. J Bowe will also begin to develop processes for each town and strategies for budget allocation. Other SNEL community support staff, consultants and council staff will assist.</p>
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**ITEM 8**

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

**8.1 Advisory Committee representative introduction to the Steering Committee**

K Boyd gave a brief statement about her background and experience.

**Sonia Williams asked to be excused from the meeting at 3.30pm.**

**ITEM 9**

**TIME AND DATE FOR NEXT MEETING**

A meeting of the Steering Committee will be held on the 15 July 2009 at the Uralla Shire Council Chambers in Uralla commencing at 2.00pm.

<p><b>Action:</b> Agenda items and apologies to <a href="mailto:jackie@snelcc.org.au">jackie@snelcc.org.au</a> prior to 6<sup>th</sup> July 2009.</p>
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The meeting closed at 3.50pm