

HiCUB – High County Urban Biodiversity A08/4305 (ADC Reference)
Guyra, Armidale Dumaresq, Uralla and Walcha Councils

Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

2:10pm Wednesday 14th October, 2009, Uralla Shire

Present: Jackie Bowe (SNEL Ltd), Kate Boyd (Community Rep), Gerry Moran (Meeting Chair, Walcha Council), Libby Cummings (Uralla Shire Council), Bob Furze (Guyra Shire Council), Robyn Bartel (UNE – Talloires)

Joanne Lenehan (SNEL Ltd casual).

Item 1 Apologies:

Tom O'Connor (Committee Chair and Uralla Shire Council), Sonia Williams (SNEL Ltd), David Steller (Armidale Dumaresq Council), Euan Belson (Armidale Dumaresq Council).

Item 2 Confirmation of minutes of previous meeting:

<p>Motion: That the Minutes of the Steering Committee Meeting held on 25th September 2009 be confirmed as a true and correct record.</p>
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<p>Moved: Bob Furze Seconded: Kate Boyd</p>
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Item 3 Declaration of interests

No interests were declared.

Item 4 Project Director's report

4.1 Financial reports

J Bowe brought to the attention of the committee four financial documents that were emailed Monday 12th October, 2009 for perusal. J Bowe said she would attempt to answer any queries relating to the financial reports as best she could in Sonia's absence and that Sonia was contactable by telephone, should need arise.

Gerry Moran (G Moran) questions if "ON GROUND WORKS" also relates to meetings conducted in various locations. Jackie Bowe (J Bowe) confirms that yes it does, and would possibly include SLEXs.

There was discussion and clarification about the profit and loss statement.

G Moran asks and confirms that all present agree to accept the statement which all responded in affirmative.

In reference to the ledger, Bob Furze (B Furze) asks if that is only project management wages and administration. J Bowe answers yes. G Moran asks if that should then add up to \$28,970.48. J Bowe explains that unfortunately she has had not had the chance to confer with Sonya Williams (S Williams) in detail regarding this.

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K Boyd requests clarification of the following: in this statement in last section on page two “POWA Project op – Wages” the use of 12 weeks as units (e.g. wages from USP J Bowe 35 hrs 12 weeks to) whereas on page one in the section “Project Mgt – Wages & Admin” 13 weeks is the unit (e.g. project admin from USP 13 wk @ \$100). The same occurs in the excel spreadsheet document entitled “Actual against Budget for 30 Sep 2009” for Staffing and Project Administration. K Boyd suggests that perhaps the discrepancy is due to the pay dates for wages and although all the figures are consistent with the previous “Profit and Loss Statement” one page summary and there is probably a logical reason for it, but would it be possible to have clarification provided at the next meeting. G Moran confirms that he also has been through the figures and it all adds up but that it can be revisited at the next meeting.

Action S Williams: Clarification of the three journal items under “Other Payments” and the 12 and 13 week discrepancy to be provided at next meeting.

Action S Williams: Correction to be made to page one third line down in the Reconciliation of Actual Against Budget, “Entries from: 01/07/2009 to 30/06/2010...”: to be changed to “Entries from: 01/07/2009 to **30/09/2009...**”

G Moran asks and confirms no other queries relating to financial statements.

4.2 Review of activities

J Bowe explains that since last meeting i) business plan submitted and received, ii) obtained approval to spend funds pre business plan approval, iii) SLEX had occurred, iv) note also that J Bowe has also been on leave, v) have met with UNE about Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E). J Bowe reports that changes have been made to UNE M & E team in relation to the education and capacity building team with Julian Prior (J Prior) stepping back and A/Professor John Scott and A/Professor Don Hine taking over that role and doing that research. Don Hine will be the major contact.

G Moran responds does the SC have the right to seek approval, to request that the university advise the SC officially of those changes.

J Bowe responds that the difficulty with that is that there is no ‘head boss’ to speak to request that from.

Robyn Bartel (R Bartel) explains that for the capacity building side of the project initially, J Prior expressed an interest but unfortunately since then recent health issues and workloads have dictated that he step away. So in terms of who else had that expertise, John and Don were identified. R Bartel explained that Don Hines is a psychologist who specialises in why people do or do not change their behaviour in relation to environmental issues.

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J Bowe said a meeting is planned for first week in November to go into detail with UNE regarding M & E. She only had a preliminary meeting with them thus far. The next meeting is to refine the questions and methodology and specific outputs from UNE.

B Furze asks if contract has any penalties written into it.

J Bowe responds that has not been drawn up yet.

R Bartel adds that it would be in the contracts, that 'deliverabilities' would be something standard negotiated in UNE contracts.

G Moran pointed out that if they are doing a contract with council, council cannot enter contracts of more than \$150,000 without a tender process.

J Bowe responded that since UNE were written into the grant proposal as delivering M & E and that \$200,000 was allocated to them, that direct negotiation with UNE was assumed appropriate. This was also stated in the Business Plan. J Bowe continued that although we have this option for direct negotiation, we also have the option to use another provider.

G Moran requests that this issue of the direct negotiation of a contract over the value of \$150,000 be addressed again at a full committee meeting that includes Tom O'Connor (T O'Connor) and David Steller (D Steller).

K Boyd queries if it would indeed be one contract or several smaller contracts. .

R Bartel also suggests they may be different anyway as Education is different department from Ecosystem Management from Social Research etc

G Moran expresses doubt to that as they are one organisation and it would be just the same as a consultancy that outsources to two or three different people.

K Boyd put forward the suggestion of splitting the M & E component and testing if there are other provides that could take on parts of it.

Suggests that J Bowe continue to talk with UNE and come back at next meeting. G Moran also clarifies that the issue is not whether we stick with UNE or not but rather the process..

J Bowe suggested that guidance should be sought from the Environment Trust.

<p>Action J Bowe: Contracts for M & E (potentially with UNE) to be further discussed in presence of full SC that includes Tom O'Connor and David Steller due to potential need to tender due to contract amount (if over \$150,000).</p>

<p>Action J Bowe: to seek advice from the Trust on this matter.</p>
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J Bowe confirms future priorities are i) liaising with UNE, ii) communications in terms of developing project website and iii) recruitment, looking to recruit administration person for three days a week and then engaging short term contractors to do some field community work.

G Moran asks with the business plan, have got received acknowledgment of its receipt and when do we get final confirmation?

J Bowe explains late November for correction and recommendations with final approval and sign off in early December. The process is as follows: business plan goes to independent technical reviewers who go through it and make their recommendations to the board of the Environment Trust. The board then review the Plan along with the recommendations. The Trust then replies to us with any required changes from the Trust Board The trust should inform us of that in late November which then gives us a few weeks to make any required changes.

Item 5 Approval of priority on ground projects prior to Business Plan signoff

G Moran enquires about the desire to undertake some works before the business plan is approved.

J Bowe explains that initially sign off of the Business Plan was thought to be in October. So when the grant was announced some fairly large works were planned for Spring. The two proposals specifically were from Armidale and Uralla. We now have special approval to spend grant money prior the Business Plan sign-off due to our climatic conditions and need to do revegetation works in Spring.

J Bowe refers to a handout outlining the two proposals in which the 'project proponents' are named. J Bowe clarified that money won't be paid to those proponents, but rather will be paid directly by SNEL to contractors and suppliers.

J Bowe then briefly explained the Armidale project.

Project proponent: Armidale Urban Rivercare Group (AURG)

Landholder/manager: ADC

Works description: Revegetation on Dumaresq Creek, 8000 plants

Budget requested: Approximately \$31,000

In-kind: From ADC and AURG: extensive site prep, clearing and spraying and maintenance.

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Justification: Site in ready in anticipation for HiCUB, works in accordance with ADC Plan for Dumaresq Creek, need Spring planting.

J Bowe added that part of the reason for using contractors is that the site is contaminated, and that use of contractors carries less risk than volunteers.

It has been requested that three quotes be supplied, and based on the quote so far (only one nursery has replied), the group was estimating \$31,000 for trees, labour and planting, council mulch, stakes, guards etc so basically the complete package.

K Boyd asks if quotes have been sought for the whole package.

J Bowe explained that quotes will only be for labour as the Armidale Tree Group has prepared the tree stock order.

There was discussion about the need to seek quotes from other nurseries for the tree stock. It was agreed that this was required.

Action, J Bowe: Seek quotes from 3 nurseries for supply of tree stock for the Armidale Project
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G Moran pointed out that we need confirmation from Armidale and Uralla that these proposals are indeed indorsed by the relevant Council to receive HiCUB funding.

J Bowe continues to outline Uralla works.

Project proponent: Uralla Shire Council

Landholder/manager: USC / private

Works description: in-stream structural works and native revegetation as per Uralla Sub-catchment Plan, Stage 1 technical report

Budget requested: Approximately \$20,000

In-kind: From USC: Materials, rock, fill, etc, staff project coordination.

Justification: Site in ready in anticipation for HiCUB, works in accordance with Sub-catchment Plan for Uralla Creek, need Spring planting.

Due to heavy machinery required for structural work the preference is to do it in a batch. There are now some additional issues to consider with the Uralla works.

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Libby Cummings (L Cummings) pointed out coordination issues between SNEL and Uralla Council, saying that the main issue being delays in Uralla Council receiving advice from SNEL on particular matters relating to the project.

L Cummings said that due to these issues the Council was unable to secure their booking of the Soil Conservation Services to do the work this spring, and that the earliest they could get the contractors now was not till after Christmas. Council is disappointed that the work has been delayed with planting now in summer council will have to put more resources into maintaining and checking the sites and council feel they may be double handling some of the project management issues.

J Bowe said she will need to work on improving coordination with Uralla Council to avoid misunderstandings.

L Cummings asks that things be done in writing and be kept clear. On the 13th October council had the Soil Conservation Service back to quote and there is also a need to obtain permits to go across streams and vegetation permits, which the Soil Conservation Service is now doing.

G Moran asks if council need a decision today whether to proceed or not.

L Cummings responds they still need a decision to approve the expenditure on the works even if implementation before business plan approval is slim. Even to book works for after Christmas, Council need to know definitely that the money is available.

R Bartel asks if Uralla will have other funding apart from HiCUB.

J Bowe replies there is some funding from the Border Rivers Gwydir CMA, this covers works that were to be done at the same time as the HiCUB funded work. The CMA funding is available but it is preferable to do it as a batch with the HiCUB work as a significant biggest expense is transport of machinery, so want to get that on site and do it all at once so there is only one cost for transport..

L Cummings queried why if this project was in the grant application we have to then apply to ourselves to do the project.

K Boyd and G Moran explain that there was a broad budget of which the allocations to specific projects had not been nominated.

G Moran asks about the Armidale works.

J Bowe responds they are seeking similar conditional approval and confirmation. Attempts were made to contact ADC to have someone formally put the project forward, but with key representatives on leave, this was unavailable. An email from Steve Gow gave endorsement of the proposal conditional on David Steller's agreement.

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G Moran expresses some concern that the Armidale works will not be supervised by the ADC, and asked who will manage the works.

J Bower replies that the ADC will do a site induction relating to working with the contamination risks. Armidale Urban Rivercare Group (AURG) will manage the works with support from HiCUB contract staff. AURG is a sub-groups of SNELCC Inc, falling under the incorporation and insurance of SNELCC Inc.

K Boyd also confirms that needs to be made clear on each project who the responsible entity is.

G Moran requests that the above insurance responsibility issues be clarified and written down

<p>Action J Bower: the above insurance responsibility issues be clarified and written down.</p>
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<p>Resolved: The SC resolved to grant provisional approval to expend HiCUB funds on Uralla Shire Council's proposal for the Uralla Creek works with the following conditions: 1) a minimum of two, preferably three written quotes are provided, if suppliers are available and 2) that council actively manage the project and 3) USC acknowledge in writing that this funding is part of USC's total allocation from HiCUB and not additional funding.</p>

<p>Resolved: The SC resolved to grant provisional approval for the Armidale Gas Works Site project works with the following conditions: 1) a minimum of two, preferably three written quotes are provided, and 2) that ADC acknowledge in writing that this funding is part of ADC's total allocation from HiCUB and is not additional funding, 3) the ADC will conduct a site induction, and 4) that the organisation ultimately responsible for site works and insurance is clearly stated and acknowledged and that that organisation ensures that project workers are aware and comply with insurance requirements.</p>
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Item 6 Matter from the Advisory Committee

6.1 LGA Biodiversity Survey Support

J Bowe explained that the biodiversity survey aspect of the project has multiple functions, e.g. guidance for community groups as well as to inform local government planning. The AC strongly felt that linking to Council Plans this should be part of the HiCUB Biodiversity Surveys. It should be assessed if funding was sufficient early on, and if not, seek additional external funding using the HiCUB funding as leverage.

L Cummings asks if local government authorities can use this for biodiversity certification.

K Boyd responds in the affirmative, but it might be just the beginning rather than the whole package.

J Bowe says she will continue to refer to Kathy Martin to seek advice on that matter.

R Bartel adds that while specific sites will be surveyed, it would form the start of a model from which you can extrapolate.

K Boyd replies that the process would involve the community and may attract some community people with enormous expertise that might volunteer (e.g. avid local bird watchers or frog experts). But it needs to be driven and quality control in terms of working out where the most useful sites are and where to direct the most effort.

Resolution: the Steering Committee is supportive of recommendations of the Advisory Committee regarding the notion of leveraging additional funding if required to carry out biodiversity surveys and planning that links to council planning.

6.2 Insurance

K Boyd explains that with insurance for volunteers working on sites, there needs to be clarity for everyone involved. For example, if you have Armidale Urban Rivercare volunteers working on a council site, then council has the insurance to cover those people as long as they are working within the requirements of the council's insurance policy. Volunteers need to be clearly informed of what those requirements are. There are also other parcels of land, private land, which will be covered by different insurance policies so again, need to know what the specific requirements are of each policy for different land tenders.

G Moran responds that the organisation that is responsible for planning and management should also be responsible for ensuring adequate insurance for that project. It may be council or it may be SNELC but it is up to the project

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manager to ensure that happens. If it is private land, then the body organising works, whether it be SNELC, they are responsible to ensure workers are appropriately informed and covered.

K Boyd responds that we need to therefore work out what will be the requirements in relation to private land, that is, what it is that can be done and covered by insurance to the extent we believe it is required, and what are the different requirements for volunteers and contractors.

J Bowe responds we therefore need guidelines about risk assessment and work practices, for example, signing on and working alone etc.

K Boyd agrees but stresses that it needs to also be consistent with the insurance policy, for example, Greening Australia policy says won't insure children under 12 or adults over 60 for certain things.

Item 7 Matters Arising

7.1 Submission of business plan

Addressed in earlier business.

7.2 Payment for SC volunteers to attend meetings

To be confirmed with trust but as Kellie is on leave will be held over to next meeting.

Action, J Bowe: check the above with the Trust.
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7.3 Project staff recruitment

J Bowe explains intentions are at the moment to employ a 3 day a week administration officer and some casual contractors for technical site supervision to assist the Armidale Urban Rivercare Group.

G Moran asks if that is within the approved budget.

J Bowe responds yes, it is still within the first year budget and there is provision for that. Also intend to employ a community coordinator contractor before Christmas, whose role would be to attract volunteers and work with the site people and administration staff as opposed to a field coordinator which is about site management and the works.

7.4 Agreement between ADC and SNELC

J Bowe confirms that the agreement has been signed and there are no other issues relating to that.

7.5 Purchasing and TRIM

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Item to be held over as some action has been taken but not yet finalised e.g. the purchasing procurements through Armidale.

7.6 Liaison with project groups

J Bowe confirms item can be removed as that is ongoing and will continue to be so.

7.7 Linking websites

J Bowe informs meeting that currently there is a HiCUB webpage within the Armidale Dumaresq Council website and there was mention of all the project partners having their information on that site in relation to their involvement and linking back to their own websites. It is now proposed to establish a separate project website.

<p>Action J Bowe: Arrange for the establishment of a new website specifically for HiCUB with links back to council and other partners.</p>

7.8 Media roles of Advisory Committee (AC)

J Bowe stated that the media role of the AC was discussed at last AC meeting. She added that some training would be appropriate, although groups would not necessarily be speaking to the media directly themselves, rather more likely to be preparing media releases and going through SNEL.

G Moran requests clarification that all media releases will go through the project director or SNEL and that members of the AC will not be approving or releasing information independently.

K Boyd confirms that it was not intended that the AC would approve any media releases or public information, rather the intention was that AC members could contribute to media releases being prepared but with the ultimate decision and signoff being done by SNEL or T O'Connor as the main spokesperson.

J Bowe also confirms it is a somewhat tricky situation as we want to encourage media initiative or some involvement as well as having some regulation. It was discussed at the previous AC meeting as a work in progress to develop guidelines and a mutual understanding.

K Boyd responds that it is important to develop with the AC a sense of what process it is they want and to ensure that the individual groups are happy with that process. If they are involved in determining the process, it is more likely that they will then comply and use the process well.

J Bowe explains that there are also different levels of experience between different groups and that there may be a need to develop different strategies

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with different groups. For example, the Armidale Urban Rivercare Group has been preparing media releases and promoting events for many years and has a high level of awareness whereas other groups are new to this and would benefit from encouragement and training. K Boyd seconds the need for a broad process with different options based on experience.

Action J Bowe: work with the members of the AC to build their capacity to produce material for the media and clarify their level of involvement.

7.9 Use of Grant Administration Funds

Issue addressed at previous meeting, awaiting conclusive outcomes.

Item 8 Correspondence

8.1 Incoming

J Bowe refers to four emails: 1) feedback from trust (addressed in previous meeting), 2) Acknowledgement of receipt of the business plan, 3) Approval to spend funds before business plan final approval and signoff, 4) Cluster meetings: J Bowe offers an open invitation for anyone to attend an upcoming 'regional cluster' meeting, which J Bowe will be attending and will report back on. J Bowe explains that some USP projects are more focused on broader urban sustainability issues but that the Tweed and Byron project has strong synergies with HiCUB.

Action, all committee members: reply to J Bowe with names of those wishing to attend the cluster meeting.

8.2 Outgoing

J Bowe refers to the business plan and request for funding.

Item 9 General Business

No general business was raised.

Item 10 Time and date for next meeting

A meeting of the Steering Committee will be held on the 11th November 2009 at the Uralla Shire Council Chambers in Uralla commencing at 2.30pm.

Action: Agenda items and apologies to jackie@snelcc.org.au prior to the 4th November 2009.

Meeting concluded at 3:40pm.