

HiCUB – High County Urban Biodiversity A08/4305 (ADC Reference)

An Environmental Trust Project across Guyra, Armidale Dumaresq, Uralla and Walcha Councils

Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

2:30pm Wednesday 11th November, 2009, Uralla Shire

Present: Jackie Bowe (SNEL Ltd), Kate Boyd (Community Rep), Gerry Moran (Walcha Council), Robyn Bartel (UNE – Talloires), Sonia Williams (SNEL Ltd), David Steller (Meeting Chair, Armidale Dumaresq Council), Warren Sellings (Uralla Shire Council) and Alice Devlin (SNEL Ltd).

Item 1 Apologies:

Tom O'Connor (Uralla Shire Council), Bob Furze (Guyra Shire Council)

The Committee discussed whether alternative reps should receive meeting agenda and notices from SNEL as well as meeting minutes. It was decided that this was unnecessary.

Item 2 Confirmation of minutes of previous meeting:

Motion: That the Minutes of the Steering Committee Meeting held on 14th October 2009 be confirmed as a true and correct record.

Moved: Gerry Moran

Seconded:

Robyn Bartel

Item 3 Declaration of interests

No interests were declared.

Item 4 Project Director's report

4.1 Financial reports

Sonia Williams explained the Actuals against Budget and the Allocations table. During this six week period, wages totalled \$8400. Alice Devlin is no longer employed on the project, Heather Apps now works two days per week on project admin.

Under Community Consultation and Meetings, the three displays at the Walcha, Armidale and Uralla festivals were included.

There is very little happening in Outgoings, according to the charge out sheet. The \$100 per week for admin costs is a standard charge.

Sonia Williams outlined that there is \$34000 remaining for year one. There are minus figures in wages and materials, as it was agreed that wages would be overspent in this period and there was no materials budget for year one. We are still within budget.

David Steller asked how work on the per-approval plantings would be accounted for. S Williams explained that probably as a cash item in the future. Approval has been obtained, but no advancement of money, so SNELCC funds will be used to sustain activities.

Jackie Bowe informed the Committee that the Trust will be meeting on the 26th November to discuss the Business Plan (BP). With feedback expected early December. J Bowe will be on leave during December. Kelly from the Trust didn't see this as an issue. At this stage there has been no indication of what the Trust will want changed in the BP.

Motion: That the financial report be accepted as true and correct.

Moved: David Steller

Seconded:

Kate Boyd

4.2 Project Staff

J Bowe informed the Committee that Michael Jarochowicz is working on a casual basis on the Dumaresq Creek works, in a field coordinator type role. Ruth Tremont is also working casually on planning works, in a community coordinator type role. There has also been some casual admin support on project displays and minute taking.

An advertisement will be placed for an admin assistant for recruitment early next year. The Community Coordinator and Field Coordinator positions will be advertised in January.

D Steller asked whether the casual employees were existing SNEL casuals. J Bowe said they were and S Williams explained that SNEL has a short term contract form with duties and hours briefly outlined.

4.3 Public Displays

J Bowe told the Committee that a short planning meeting was held for the then upcoming festival displays. The Walcha and Uralla displays were both considered worthwhile, however, the display was not in a good position at Walcha. G Moran said he would raise this at the festival committee meeting for next year. There was a reasonable amount of interest with people signing up to be informed about the project.

J Bowe said that the displays were easy to set up alone. S Williams suggested the purchasing of walls for the SNLECC marquee, with HiCUB printed on them, as this would be a good use of promotion budget funds. S Williams explained that it was purchased with funds from the Small Equipment Grant.

D Steller enquired how the project was going in terms of getting the message out to the community. He suggested having a display at the markets in mall and/or the growers market, both in Armidale. J Bowe suggested these may be an option for volunteers. D Steller told the Committee that businesses in the mall are allowed to open on market Sundays, and suggested having a display on the SNLECC balcony with a BBQ.

Action: J Bowe to look into having a display on market Sunday with the help of volunteers.

4.4 On-ground Works Planning

Ruth Tremont is working on this planning, including plans for the Armidale Golf Club, the paddock below the Armidale Tree Group and the Walcha Landcare regeneration site on the edge of town. Part of R Tremont's brief was to identify opportunities for any community involvement. These plans will be treated as pilots, to be assessed by the technical panel and so that improvements and modifications can be made to the planning support provided by project staff.

Part of the Tree Group's plan is to establish regular working bees to maintain the site. One strategy will be signage for users (walkers etc) eg. "This is a HiCUB site, working bees occur here... get involved, contact the Tree Group".

The committee agreed that HiCUB project staff should always seek to build capacity of volunteers so they can develop skills and work somewhat independently.

4.5 On-ground Implementation

In response to information requested at the last meeting for approval of on-ground works. J Bowe tabled a summary of information collected.

The Uralla on-ground works were discussed. The decision for Uralla Shire Council to accept the Soil Con quote was made at a meeting of Council.

Action: J Bowe to obtain a written copy of this decision.
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D Steller, K Boyd and R Bartel declared their interest and left the room for the discussion about the Armidale Tree Group (ATG) quote. J Bowe advised the Committee that three suppliers were asked for quotes, one declined. Quotes were received from ATG and Cressbrook Native Nursery. Angus Adair and Bruce Whan (Executives of Armidale Urban Rivercare Group (AURG)) selected the ATG, as the difference wasn't considered significant and the ATG have experience in plantings on Dumaresq Creek.

Action: J Bowe to formally present this decision to the Steering Committee at the next meeting.
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D Steller, R Bartel and K Boyd return to join the meeting.

The management of projects was discussed. The Uralla project will be managed by Uralla Shire Council's (USC) project officer (either Nanette Lamrock or Kath Little). J Bowe said that she needs to define with USC the degree to which they will be paid as project officers from HiCUB and how much will be council contribution.

The Armidale (Dumaresq Creek) project is being managed by AURG, a sub-group of SNELCC Inc. They are volunteers, who will be supported by HiCUB staff.

Insurance was discussed. USC provide insurance for project staff and Soil Con have their own insurance. The Tree Group need to provide a certificate of currency. S Williams clarified that there are a number of types of insurance that are potentially needed; public liability, professional indemnity and workers comp.

4.6 Establishment of Processes

These are defined in the Business Plan. J Bowe will receive feedback from the Trust, but can begin establishing a technical assessment panel.

4.7 Communications

J Bowe explained that the communications strategy is imbedded in the Business Plan, but that it needs more fleshing out and there are some priority actions such as establishing a web presence. W Sellings said Kath Little is currently investigating website options for USC and that the HiCUB project could benefit from her research.

4.8 TAFE Training – Introduction to Biodiversity and Ecosystems

J Bowe informed the Committee that as part of the HiCUB partnership with TAFE, an opportunity arose to run some Saturday workshops, aimed at community environmental education. TAFE would provide the administration support, HiCUB would provide the funding for trainers and have input into the content of the course. The workshops would provide community education in the form of an introduction to biodiversity in ecosystems. There will also be a Land management for hobby farmer course, which SNEL will fund from other sources.

It was suggested that the course could be ongoing and aid in training volunteers. It should also be reviewed to see whether it should be held in Walcha, Guyra and Uralla.

Action: J Bowe to obtain and evaluation or some form of profile of who is attending the course.
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4.9 Project Staff Training

DECCW are holding public participation training especially for USP project staff, which J Bowe and Julian Prior are attending in Parramatta from the 23rd to 25th November. This will be paid for out of project interest money.

4.10 New project links

J Bowe informed the Committee that new links have been made to the project. The Armidale growers market will be donating a portion of their proceeds to the landcare community resource centre. Computers for the community resource centre have been donated by Ausenergy. Sustainable Living Armidale plan to set-up an SLA work area with one of the computers.

Item 5 Processes, Expression of Interest for Suppliers and Technical Assessment Panel

EOI process for suppliers

The issue of expressions of interest for suppliers was raised. K Boyd declared her interest and left the room. J Bowe suggested that each type of service required by the project have a list of criteria or skills that are desirable, then people can express interest to provide expertise on one or more service.

D Steller queried why this process is necessary. J Bowe commented that this was the process agreed upon in the Business Plan for the purpose of having a list to supplier on hand to choose from. This process would also help to build the NRM trade directory that is listed as an output of the project. It was suggested that J Bowe check what councils can provide internally. It was decided that expressions of interest would need to be called for more than once.

Establishment of Technical Assessment Panel

The Committee decided that some criteria needs to be developed in establishing the technical panel.

K Boyd returned to the meeting.

Item 6 Matters Arising

6.1 Clarification of previous project financial report

S Williams clarified that SNLECC pays are entered into the system on a fortnightly basis. It was also clarified that wages are not included in projection operation and administration costs.

6.2 Contract(s) for Monitoring and Evaluation – process to be resolved with guidance from the Trust

J Bowe told the Committee that she checked with the Trust, who said that direct negotiation of contracts with project partners was a very difficult aspect of the project. It is up to council to follow their legislation. Tom O'Connor had said that he would investigate the legalities.

Action: Tom O'Connor to investigate Council legislation.

Action: J Bowe to discuss at Cluster meeting

S Williams left the meeting at 3.55pm.

6.3 Approval of priority on-ground projects prior to sign-off of Business Plan

See 4.5.

6.4 Payment for attendance of volunteers at Steering Committee meetings – check with Trust

J Bowe told the Committee that the Trust approved this payment. As an indication, the Trust pay \$100 per half day and \$200 per full day. This applies to Steering Committee meetings only, not Advisory Committee meetings.

Action: S Williams to arrange payment.

6.5 Project Staff Recruitment

See 4.2

6.6 Agreement between ADC and SNEL

Finalised.

6.6 Project Website

D Steller asked whether this would go under the SNELCC banner? J Bowe said no, it would be a separate website and that it would be more interactive. The Committee agreed that the website should be interactive.

Action: J Bowe to ask about websites at the Cluster meeting.

6.6 Cluster meeting attendance 18th November, Grafton

J Bowe advised that a Steering Committee member is welcome to attend, but none were available. This is a compulsory meeting for project directors and J Bowe would be attending.

Item 7 Correspondence

7.1 Incoming

Nil

7.2 Outgoing

Nil

Item 8 General Business

D Steller asked about feedback from the last Advisory Committee meeting. J Bowe explained that biodiversity plans for each town were discussed. The Advisory Committee strongly supported that these plans should be linked into local government planning.

Item 9 Time and date for next meeting

A meeting of the Steering Committee will be held on the 13th January 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 January.

Meeting concluded at 4.30pm