

## Minutes of the Tweed Coast Koala Management Committee Meeting held Tuesday 3 December 2019

### Venue:

Canvas & Kettle Meeting Room, Murwillumbah Civic Centre

### Time:

2.00pm

**Present:** Rhonda James, Scott Hetherington, Bill Hoskins, Lorraine Vass, David Norris Jenny Hayes (part), Marama Hopkins, Tracey Stinson, Cr Katie Milne, David Oxenham (part/Item 1), Simon Dawson (Team Koala - part).

**Apologies:** Mark Kingston.

### Minutes of Previous Meeting:

**Moved:** Rhonda James

**Seconded:** Lorraine Vass

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Tweed Coast Koala Management Committee meeting held Tuesday 17 September 2019 be accepted as a true and accurate record of the proceedings of that meeting.

### Business Arising:

1. Marama to follow up on Uki koala food tree plantation site maintenance progress
  - Marama provided an update on this issue:
    - Currumbin Wildlife Hospital require additional sites where koala food trees can be planted and harvested for feeding koalas in care.
    - There is one existing plantation at the Uki water treatment plant by agreement between Council and Currumbin Wildlife Hospital.
    - Water Unit site manager has identified some concerns with maintenance of the plantation by Currumbin Wildlife Hospital. This was reported to Currumbin Wildlife Hospital and rectified.
    - Kingscliff (Chinderah) and Tyalgum water treatment plants have been previously identified as potential additional sites. There is an existing contract for the establishment of a 2.5 ha plantation at Tyalgum from 2014 that hasn't been implemented. The distance from Currumbin is assumed as a possible reason for this but not confirmed.
  - David Oxenham noted that use of the western extent of the Kingscliff (Chinderah) water treatment plant for this purpose may be constrained by future expansion requirements. David also noted that the water unit has other sites that may or may not be suitable including at Bray Park, Doon Doon and Kingscliff.

**Action:** Marama to draft a memo to the Director Engineering requesting the identification of any sites that may be suitable for the establishment of a koala food tree plantation. The specifications and draft terms of agreement, should there be suitable sites, will be included to inform consideration of the request.

2. Scott to invite Director Engineering to next meeting to assist in progressing food tree plantation action - complete

3. Scott to prepare and distribute a media release sharing the successful KPOM outcomes (including the 2018 koala study and habitat restoration progress), together with acknowledgment of the awards received by committee members - not commenced.
4. Scott to request that Tanya undertake an analysis of opportunities and constraints for additional habitat restoration between Pottsville Wetland and Wooyung Nature Reserve, for discussion with committee at next meeting - not commenced (hold over for appointment of new project officer, commencing Monday 13 January 2020).
5. Scott to request project officer, once appointed, to confirm arrangements for Friends of Cudgen Nature Reserve to operate as volunteers on council land.
6. Scott to finalise the year 4 annual summary report, including the addition of an issues and challenges section as per previous years and arrange design and publication of a version for publication - complete (draft circulated).

**Action:** All committee members to provide any feedback on the draft year 4 annual summary report to Scott for inclusion in the final version.

7. Rhonda and David to inspect the area west of the Black Rocks Sports Field to identify any areas suitable for planting - carry over this action to 2020.
8. Scott to discuss preparation of a Tweed Link article promoting the value of putting out water for wildlife, including koalas during the current dry conditions - not commenced.
  - Lorraine provided an overview of the 'blinky drinkers' and noted that Friends of the Koala have some to install in Northern Rivers
  - Rhonda noted attending a koala rescue call where a member of the public has been providing water for koalas and other wildlife near the Pottsville Wetland. This may provide a good element for the proposed article.
  - It was noted that there may be merit in participating in the trial of the drinkers if there is a coordinated approach to design and monitoring effectiveness.

**Action:** Lorraine to investigate and report back on the current plans for installation and maintenance of the Friends of the Koala drinkers

## Agenda Items:

1. *Food tree plantations (David Oxenham)*
  - Addressed at 'business arising' item 1.
2. *OEH SOS regional koala conservation and recovery project update (Scott)*
  - Preliminary mapping for regional priority areas has been made available by University of Queensland and is being used to guide the first round of invitations for landholders to participate.
  - The project officer is attending the Friends of the Koala regional koala implementation group meetings and has also established a regular communication schedule with project officers from the other two SOS koala projects (Wingecaribee and Port Macquarie-Hastings).

- Training has been completed with BCT and arrangements are in place for the commencement of voluntary conservation agreement applications.
3. *Lot 919 Pottsville - koala holding facility construction update (Scott)*
- Development application lodged and being assessed
  - Final documentation and tender documents in preparation
  - Proposed construction start date March/April 2020
  - Operational budget in development with Currumbin Wildlife Hospital.

**Action:** Scott to arrange a site visit with Tracey and Rhonda to discuss the overall site management and progress of the Friends of Cudgen Reserve Environmental Trust project.

4. *Clothiers Creek Road (Jenny/Rhonda)*

- Information prepared and submitted to Geoff Provest in response to request for recommendations regarding the installation of fixed point speed camera on Clothiers Creek Rd
- Simon noted that it will only take drivers one minute longer to travel Clothiers Creek Road through the koala zone at 40 km/hr than it currently does at 70km/hr.
- Team Koala has met with Geoff Provest and Ray Clarke (Council Traffic Engineer) to discuss concerns and management options for Clothiers Creek koala zone. These meetings were followed up with a letter from Team Koala to the Local Traffic Committee (LTC) which was discussed at the LTC meeting of 28 November. The Committee's recommendation arising from this correspondence will be provided to Council for consideration in February 2020.
- Rhonda noted that there is a need to increase accuracy of records for incidents, that road strike was highlighted as an issue at the current NSW upper house inquiry and that potential issues with koalas on the road are likely with the pending subdivision at the Bogangar end of the koala zone.
- The requirement for an ongoing integrated program of education, compliance and traffic management was identified and agreed. It was also recommended that a concept plan for speed reduction and installation of slow points throughout the koala zone be developed.

**Action:** Scott to draft a letter on behalf of the Mayor requesting enforcement of the speed limits in the koala zone on Clothiers Creek Road.

5. *Year 4 annual report (Scott)*

- Draft summary report for publication circulated for consideration and comment.

6. *Black Rocks sports field precinct master plan update (Scott)*

- A submission on behalf of the Tweed Coast Koala Management Committee, inclusive of the comments received and agreed through out of session consideration, was lodged as part of the preliminary consultation on the proposed Black Rocks sports field precinct master plan.
- Council to consider a report at its meeting of 5 December detailing the process, input and how stakeholder interests and requests were addressed in the plan development. Council will also give consideration as to the requirement for public exhibition of the draft plan.

6. *Kings Forest KPOM update (Scott)*

- Scott provided an update on Mark's behalf of the latest status of the Kings Forest KPOM.

- The latest review identified around 50 comments that have all been agreed and are in the process of being incorporated to the plan, which should then be able to be approved.

Cr Katie Milne asked to move a vote of thanks to Mark for his work on Kings Forest KPOM that was supported by the committee unanimously.

## General Business:

### 1. *Upper house inquiry - koala populations and habitat in NSW*

- A submission was prepared to the NSW Upper House Inquiry into koala populations and their habitats. In response to this submission, Council was invited to be a witness at a hearing of the inquiry held in Ballina on 18 October 2019.
- Transcripts and supporting documentation for the inquiry are available at the following web location: <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/committees/inquiries/Pages/inquiry-details.aspx?pk=2536>

### 2. *Wildcare/ University of Queensland study - koalas and livestock*

- Wildcare has been asked by the University of Queensland to participate in a short survey to help inform research into whether livestock, especially cattle are a potential threat to koalas in areas where koala habitat overlaps with livestock grazing. Survey responses will provide valuable information that can be used to develop management strategies to help reduce koala mortalities caused by livestock.
- The survey can be completed by accessing it at the following link: <https://survey.app.uq.edu.au/Survey-of-livestock-inflicted-injuries-or-deaths-to-koalas.aspx?i=3228860dde994fd89d2d3d4f0701d89b>

### 3. *Fire and koalas*

- The committee discussed the current situation for koalas on the Tweed Coast in light of the current drought and high fire risk conditions.
- It was acknowledged that fire management is a high priority issue, including due to the potential for arson in bushland reserves and that this issue should be considered carefully during the upcoming review of the Tweed Coast KPOM.
- All asset protection zones have been assessed and additional maintenance actions completed where required. Additional compliance patrols are being completed by Rangers, especially on weekends and in known problem areas.
- Bill Hoskins noted specific concerns regarding the section of Pottsville Wetland near Caroline Street. He has observed and dismantled piles of sticks arranged as if for a bonfire in this location several times in the past few weeks.
- The issue of post fire response and koala rescue was also discussed. Specific training is required by NSW RFS to access the fire ground once declared safe to do so. A range of other related issues including the detectability of injured or deceased animals and post fire supplementary water or feeding were also discussed.

**Action:** Arrange for a sub-group of the committee visit Port Macquarie Koala Hospital after the current fire season to investigate fire preparedness and response strategies.

**Action:** Scott to report Caroline St issues to Rangers and request inclusion of this location in scheduled patrols.

### 4. *Land acquisitions*

# Minutes

- Scott noted that a number of key properties on the Tweed Coast with important koala habitat were proposed as potential acquisitions to the National Parks estate in response to a call for nominations from the NSW Minister for Environment.

**Next Meeting:** 2020 meeting schedule to be drafted and distributed.

Meetings to be scheduled in the months of:

- February
- April
- July
- September
- December

The meeting closed at 4.15pm.

**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S COMMENTS:**

Nil.

**EXECUTIVE MANAGEENT TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Nil.