

Collingwood Beach Dune Vegetation Reference Group

Wednesday 24 June 3:00PM – 4:45PM

Minutes

Present: Johanna Pullinger, Noel Rosskelly, Dawn Thompson (new member), Giorgio Antonelli, (new member), Councillor Allan Baptist, Russ Pigg-General Manager (observer), Tim Fletcher (Director Planning and Development) Kelie Lowe –Environmental Services Manager, Isabelle Ghetti – Natural Resources and Floodplain Manager, Kerry Thompson-Natural Areas operation officer; Brooke Marshal-NGH, David Maynard -NGH

Apologies: Barbara Liddle, Debra Evelyn, Mark Corrigan, Bruce McKenzie, Melissa McManus (*note: apologies were received prior to the meeting but were not tabled at the meeting*).

Welcome/Introduction

Councillor Baptist advised that at last night Council meeting (Tuesday 23/06/2015), Council resolved to appoint 2 VRRRA members to the Reference group being Dawn Thompson and Giorgio Antonelli. (Note to the consultant: VRRRA = Vincentia Residents and Ratepayers Association-Council's recognised Community Consultative Body (CCB) for Vincentia). Cllr Baptist welcomed NGH consultants Brooke Marshall and David Maynard.

Presentation by the consultant

Brooke and David delivered the attached presentation to the reference group (refer Attachment 1_ presentation NGH).

There was a discussion on the importance of the consultation process and how (what methods) NGH would use to consult with the community. It was generally agreed by members present that surveys were not considered the best approach. A number of methods were discussed including -

- kiosk/open house;
- web/facebook to inform and collect information;
- workshops; and
- attendance by NGH at a Vincentia Residents & Ratepayers Association (VRRRA) meeting.

There was a discussion about the need for visual tools when consulting with the community and maps to be included in the draft plan.

Consultants sought additional information and suggestions as to Interest Groups (tourists, walkers, surfers, cyclists, recreational users etc.)

Discussion occurred around any further reiteration of key issues (costs of maintenance, banksia proliferation, loss of amenity, importance of dune stabilisation).

Feedback sought from members of the reference group

NGH requested feedback by members of the reference group on the following questions:

- Are there additional reference documents that should be considered by NGH?
(refer Attachment2_document register)
- Are there additional key issues to be considered?
(refer Attachment3_key issues register- so far this register has been populated based on Locale report)
- Who are the key stakeholders?
(refer Attachment4_stakeholders)

During the meeting additional information and suggestions as to Interest Groups included - tourists, walkers, surfers, cyclists, recreational users etc.

Future meetings

Debra asked by email that future meetings be preferably held on Fridays so that she is able to attend.

More notice should be given to members of the group.

Action: Clr Baptist to advise of his availability for:

- the last two weeks of July – the meeting will be to discuss the draft engagement strategy
- mid August - to discuss the draft vegetation management plan before it is reported to council

Timeline

A timeline was presented by Brooke. The group requested that key dates be identified where the group input would be requested.

(note: given the timeline provided it would be expected to report to Council to recommend public exhibition of the document at Council Policy and Resources committee of 8 September 2015- a reference group briefing and Councillors briefing will need to be organised prior to 25 August)

Conclusion

Councillor Baptist concluded the meeting by reiterating the fact that the objectives of this project were adopted by Council and are still guiding the project. Councillor Baptist also stated that there were 5 other members of the reference group who were not in attendance at the meeting and that would seek their contribution to the feedback sought by NGH via email. Councillor

Baptist recognised the hard work and valuable contribution of the reference group during the past 18 months. Councillor Baptist also stated that he looked forward to continuing to work with the reference group, the whole of the community and NGH to deliver a vegetation management plan for Collingwood Beach.

Amendment to Minutes - additional points discussed at the meeting of 24 June 2015.

Immediately after the paragraph that currently reads

“Discussion occurred around any further reiteration of key issues (costs of maintenance, banksia proliferation, loss of amenity, importance of dune stabilisation,)”

The following should be added

“The attendees sought the opinion of the Chairman and the Consultant regarding her ability to consider all options, i.e. whether the objectives/recommendations in her brief were fixed or "negotiable"? The Consultant, the Chairman and Mr Tim Fletcher all agreed that the Consultant's professional freedom and judgement were not to be curtailed by the objectives and recommendations as currently described in the Terms of Reference. Words used by the Chairman and Mr Tim Fletcher to describe the objectives/recommendations were:

“broad”

“not definitive”

“not pre-determined”

“broad base”

“no fixed position on anything”

“broad guideline with no detail agreed or fixed”, and

“a guide only with no agreement on detail and that all options were up for consideration”

It was agreed that the Terms of Reference which form the basis of the brief to the Consultant form guidance to enable the process to move forward, with no agreement at this stage on any particular direction or detail. Further it was agreed that there were no fixed positions except for a sustainable dune, and all options were to be considered.

A question was raised about the appropriateness of the wedge mentioned in the objectives, and whether it is compulsory in the final plan.

The Chairman commented that it is “accepted practice”.

The attendees raised the importance of maintaining views and indeed the restoration of views, if vandalism is to be avoided.

The reasons given against the need for views were:

- people, including residents and others do not have right to views, and
- people on the beach may not like being seen from the houses, as they wish to have privacy.

The Consultant raised concerns about the cost of maintenance, and was informed that this was not an issue to be taken into account.

The Consultant proposed producing various alternative plans, but was discouraged from presenting too many options.

Giorgio Antonelli stated that the objectives would have been better defined by replacing:

"maximise filtered views from appropriate locations" with

"maximise views while stabilising the dunes"

Noel Rosskelly recommended that the Consultant reference North Sydney, Wollongong, North Avoca and Redlands Councils as they had been proactive and forward thinking in their vegetation management of waterfront and foreshore areas.