

**Clarence Valley Biodiversity Advisory Committee - Meeting #7 Minutes**

**9:30 am Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

**CVC Council Chambers, Prince Street, Grafton**

**Present:** Cr Greg Clancy (Chair), Cr Peter Johnstone, John Edwards, Laura Noble, Barbara Linley, Peter Lake, Linda Wright, Adrian Deville (online till 11:30), Phil Redpath, Reece Luxton, Heather Mitchell, Scott Lenton, Gene Mason, Nigel Blake, Pat Edwards (guest) **Apologies:** Jonathon Yantsch

<i>Item</i>	<i>Discussion</i>	<i>Responsible person &amp; deadline</i>
<b>1. Meeting opening – 9:40am</b>	Acknowledgement of Country	Cr Greg Clancy (Chair) opened the meeting and welcomed guests
<b>2. Minutes of meeting #6 held 14 June 2023</b>	<b>Moved:</b> Peter Lake; <b>seconded:</b> Barbara Linley – all in favour - carried	
<b>3. Matters arising from previous meeting</b>	<p><b>1. Tree register</b> (LN) – ongoing.</p> <p><b>2. Animal Control Strategy</b> – cat management (BL) –Issues regarding roaming and native wildlife. Keeping Animals Policy – submission submitted on behalf of BAC - publicly exhibited – submissions received and report to go to Council in September. GC – put further motions to LGNSW conference later this year. Cat management could be a motion to go to the conference – committee could alternatively support Blue Mountains Council’s motion.</p>	Items from Action List

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	<p><b>3. Biodiversity Offset Policy</b> - 3 questions raised – 1. <i>How much is in the fund</i> \$217,000 accumulated over past 9 years – both part 4 and part 5 contributions from developers and council works); 2. <i>Where are the funds going?</i> have used funds for VMS for emu project; 3. <i>How successful is the policy?</i> - hasn't been fully assessed. AD – how often is policy used like-for-like? Unknown. Need benchmark – audit of whether policy should be more prescriptive. GC – offsets should only rarely be used. BL – pricing of removal of trees requires review. HM - CVC approach DA clearing from the 'avoid, minimise, offset' pathway – and offset is the absolute last resort. AD – more prescriptive provisions in the BOP review to ascertain what veg was removed in order to replace 'like for like'.</p> <p>PR – CVC still does not have an ecologist on staff to carry out this important job to check on vegetation type, PJ – Council rejected the recommendation to get an ecologist but staffing is controlled the GM – it is an operational issue so Councillors can recommend but that's as far as it goes. GC – motion did go to recent council meeting – GC moved that although its an operational manner and GM has the say – we cannot make the decision but can decide to support the employment of an ecologist but that was defeated by the councillors – 5 votes against. Valuing biodiversity offsets – no one has come up with sound economic basis for valuing offsets – see what every single tree would be worth as a product (e.g., if it were used for timber products) and then factored into council charges for offsets.</p>	

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	<p>LN – Discussed auditing the DA’s that come through for the percentage that are requiring offsets– need a benchmark to be able to review the effectiveness of the BOP.</p> <p>SL – <b>BOP offset review</b> included in the Green Infrastructure Policy. Requires a proponent to enter into a Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA)– which is a legal document that requires significant input including legal preparation and administration usually making these not cost effective. Legislation regulating how Council can receive money from developers is very limited – CVC can collect contributions under certain conditions, but biodiversity offset contributions – only through the Voluntary Planning Agreement is the only mechanism Council’s having to collect these funds.</p> <p><b>4. Call to phase out native forest logging.</b> Went to June Council meeting and deferred October Council meeting to allow for consultation and submissions from timber industry and other interested parties including the community. Intention is not to close the timber industry but transition into more ecologically/economically sound industry. Discussion regarding costs/profits associated with the industry, and information surrounding area logged per year was examined. Important to point out this is not about closing the timber industry but refocussing to being ecologically responsible.</p> <p>CVC proposing a motion to Council for state government to review the situation, not just a CV issue. It’s a state-wide issue. Community interest and dissatisfaction of native forest logging is growing across the state.</p>	


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	<p><b>5. 30/30 targets and wildlife protection areas</b> – no further action at this time.</p>	
<p><b>4. Item 1 – CVC policy review</b></p>	<p>Policy - <b>Gas Filled Balloons on Council Managed Land</b> (included in BAC meeting information).</p> <p>Discussion regarding whether only helium filled balloons considered, and the practice of releasing balloons at funerals is common. LN – if only internal review – would prefer to comment publicly - publicise the issue of balloons in broad context of plastic littering in the Clarence Magazine. GC legally in NSW can release up to 19 gas filled balloons (under the <i>POEO Act</i>), and JE stated perhaps we should be lobbying state government to change this (committee decided against this - better to focus locally, and the policy hasn't been adopted yet).</p>	<p>Action – when the policy is considered by Council – an article is to go into the Clarence Magazine regarding gas filled balloons and cleaning up after using every type of balloon (perhaps to be included as a broader general litter approach)</p>
<p><b>5. Item 2 – Update on Council Actions</b> - biodiversity projects – koala/flying fox/coastal emu</p>	<p>Information update from NRM staff</p> <p>Operational Plan 2023/24 being implemented - continued delivery of actions out of the Biodiversity Strategy – actions to be decided for 23/24.</p> <p>Koala projects</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. mapping for priority koala habitat as part of Department of Planning &amp; Environment funding from the NSW koala strategy – developing the consultant brief to engage botanists and koala detection dog teams to carry out on ground surveys.</li> <li>2. koala vehicle strike project - VMS trailers received and data loggers on Ashby – Tullymorgan Road – part of DPE funding, and WIRES developing corflute signs warning of koala crossing – aiming to reduce</li> </ol>	

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	<p>vehicle strikes – identify changing behaviour through the VMS trailers – before, during and after the VMS have been removed.</p> <p>Discussion regarding dog attacks on koalas – referred to Keeping of Animals Policy – limit is 3 dogs however policy is difficult to enforce in this respect it is difficult to attribute dog to owner. Certain breeds are regulated (referred to policy). PR difficult to prosecute under existing legislation.</p> <p>Flying fox projects</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. LGNSW Susan Island Restoration Flying-fox – Project Officer Rhianna Faithful is developing the monitoring plan and community engagement strategy and planning some community events in conjunction with Gumbaynggirr women</li> </ol> <p>Coastal emu - Guardian Australia story underway – as part of their ‘Bird of the Year’ – popular vote on favourite native bird – to be published in September</p> <p>Agricultural drone purchase for weed survey mapping – to be used in 23/24 year.</p> <p>Bush Regeneration Strategy - ongoing</p>	
<p><b>6. Morning tea – 11:00 to 11:15am</b></p>		
<p><b>7. General business</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. GC – Glossy black-cockatoo workshop (see PE) – 60 people for field day in Pillar Valley – objective to find nests (so far only 3 found). Now the focus is the CV to find nests so surveys will be carried out shortly. Long-lived species – over 50 years, only laying 1 egg at a time. GC – trees, sightings of nests etc can be logged into the Bionet atlas.</li> <li>2. GC- platypus survey (see BL)</li> </ol>	<p>Action – BL to send information to RL regarding platypus surveys - September</p> <p>RL to send BAC information on glossy black-cockatoo workshop and upcoming platypus survey</p>

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	<p>3. LW – DA for sand mine at Dilkoon. Existing water extraction licence for at least 10 years.  <b>NOTE</b> Cr PJ left room as he has a declared interest as a member on the Northern Regional Planning Panel (NRPP) which will be reviewing this particular DA.            PR – serious concerns raised with DA – including notifications of adjacent landholders, recent fire etc. Inconsistencies between flora &amp; fauna reporting, missing appendices, and other issues with the ecological conclusions drawn.  <b>NOTE</b> members of the BAC have raised concerns about this DA, but BAC not within the scope of this committee to take action. GC suggested individuals can make submissions, and through various environmental groups that are making submissions regarding this DA.</p> <p>4. PR – bushfire query why has permit system not being bought forward – (bushfire danger period) – impact on biodiversity.</p> <p>5. LN - advise Customer Service staff regarding who to contact about suspicious looking ants, particularly threat of Fire Ants etc.</p> <p>6. LN - OzFish is looking for people to help with citizen science water quality data gathering. Noted for members</p>	<p>Action - RL to arrange for bushfire guest speaker for November meeting</p> <p>Action - RL to inform customer service of DPI's number regarding suspicious looking ants. Etc.</p>
<b>8. Action List</b>	<p>Action list to be noted</p> <p>Agenda items for next meeting to be forwarded up to 7 days before next meeting</p>	<p>RL – with minutes of meeting</p> <p>RL – organise guest bushfire speaker for next meeting.</p>

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	Potential agenda item is 'bushfire' for next meeting – impacts on biodiversity, environmental protection concerns, perhaps request officer from Planning and Environment section of RFS?	
<b>9. Meeting closed – 12:23pm</b>	Next meeting – Thursday 17 November 2023 – CVC Council chambers, Grafton	

Minutes confirmed by Cr Greg Clancy

Signature 

Date 22/8/2023

END