



CONFIRMED MINUTES

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

23 JUNE 2020

I certify that the minutes of the meeting of the Environmental Advisory Committee held on Tuesday, 23 June 2020 were confirmed on Wednesday, 19 August 2020.



Presiding Person



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23 JUNE 2020

ATTENTION/DISCLAIMER

The purpose of this Committee Meeting is to discuss and make recommendations to Council about items appearing on the agenda and other matters for which the Committee is responsible. The Committee has no power to make any decisions which are binding on the Council or the Shire of Mundaring unless specific delegation of authority has been granted by Council. No person should rely on or act on the basis of any advice or information provided by a Member or Employee, or on the content of any discussion occurring, during the course of the Committee Meeting.

The Shire of Mundaring expressly disclaims liability for any loss or damage suffered by any person as a result of relying on or acting on the basis of any advice or information provided by a Member or Employee, or the content of any discussion occurring during the course of the Committee Meeting.

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**ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
COUNCIL CHAMBER, 7000 GREAT EASTERN HIGHWAY, MUNDARING**

1.0 OPENING PROCEDURES

The Presiding Person declared the meeting open at 6.03pm.

Acknowledgement of Country

Shire of Mundaring respectfully acknowledges the Whadjuk people of the Noongar Nation, who are the traditional custodians of this land. We wish to acknowledge Elders past, present and emerging and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the region.

1.1 Announcement of Visitors

Nil

1.2 Attendance/Apologies

Members

Mr Darren Murphy	
Ms Christine Groom	
Mr Tom Hogarth	
Mr Robert Ragg	
Mr Mark Robertson	
Mr Michael Waite	
Cr Darrell Jones	South Ward
Ms Larissa Byrne	
Dr Stephan Millett	

Staff

Shane Purdy	Director Infrastructure Services
Angus Money	Manager Planning and Environment
Briony Moran	Co-ordinator Environment and Sustainability
Ruth Broz	Minute Secretary

Apologies

Cr Amy Collins	Central Ward
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Absent

Nil

Guests

Nil

Members of the Public

Nil

Members of the Press

Nil

2.0 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY PRESIDING MEMBER WITHOUT DISCUSSION

2.1 Resignation of Jim Thom

The Presiding Person acknowledged Jim's resignation and that a letter of thanks was sent.

2.2 Presiding Person – Environmental Advisory Committee

Cr Darryl Jones advised that due to work commitments he would no longer attend and chair the Environmental Advisory Committee meetings.

3.0 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

3.1 Declaration of Financial Interest and Proximity Interests

Elected Members must disclose the nature of their interest in matters to be discussed at the meeting (*Part 5 Division 6 of the Local Government Act 1995*).

Employees must disclose the nature of their interest in reports or advice when giving the report or advice to the meeting (*Sections 5.70 and 5.71 of the Local Government Act 1995*).

Nil

3.2 Declaration of Interest Affecting Impartiality

An Elected Member or an employee who has an interest in a matter to be discussed at the meeting must disclose that interest (*Shire of Mundaring Code of Conduct, Local Government (Admin) Reg. 34C*).

Cr Jones declared an interest affecting impartiality in Item 6.1 (Mundaring Environmental Art Project 2021 Theme) as he has worked in the Perth NRM sector, associated with staff at Noongar Boodjar Language Centre and is a Board Member of the Mundaring Arts Centre.

4.0 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

COMMITTEE DECISION RECOMMENDATION	EAC1.06.20
Moved by Mr Waite	Seconded by Mr Murphy

That the Minutes of the Environmental Advisory Committee Meeting held 29 November 2019 be confirmed.

CARRIED 9/0

For: Mr Murphy, Ms Groom, Mr Hogarth, Mr Ragg, Mr Robertson, Mr Waite, Cr Jones, Ms Byrne and Dr Millett

Against: Nil

5.0 PRESENTATIONS

Nil

6.0 REPORTS OF EMPLOYEES

6.1 Mundaring Environmental Art Project 2021 Theme

File Code	GV.MTG 6/7
Author	Briony Moran, Coordinator Environment and Sustainability
Senior Employee	Mark Luzi, Director Statutory Services
Disclosure of Any Interest	Nil
Attachments	Nil

SUMMARY

The Mundaring Environmental Art Project (MEAP) is a long running environmental education initiative with a different theme each year.

It is recommended that the EAC endorse an Aboriginal ecological knowledge theme for the 2021 MEAP, 'Caring for Country'.

BACKGROUND

MEAP is an annual program delivered in partnership with the Mundaring Arts Centre. It includes an environmental drawing competition and exhibition for local primary school students. Classes and students can investigate an annual environmental or sustainability theme and explore solutions, then develop their ideas into an A4 artwork for an exhibition.

The winners work with a professional artist to adapt and paint their design onto a banner to be displayed in the town centre. After a year the banners are returned to the students as the new designs are installed.

The banners currently displayed in the Mundaring town centre are from the 2019 theme, Things with Wings. The theme for 2020 is Clean Energy – Let's Reduce Our Energy Impact. While entries are not due until 21 August 2020 is anticipated that participation may be lower than usual as schools have been significantly disrupted by Covid-19.

STATUTORY / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Shire's Environmental Sustainability Policy includes a number of principles that relate to collaborative environmental education initiatives such as MEAP, including:

3.2. The Shire seeks to build and maintain effective partnerships to promote environmental awareness, responsible natural resource management and sustainable lifestyles.

3.3. Information will be made available for schools and residents on sustainability and local environmental issues through publications, talks, workshops and other mediums.

3.4. The Shire encourages enjoyment, environmental stewardship and care of natural areas by residents and community groups.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

Mundaring Strategic Community Plan 2020 - 2030

Priority 1 - Community

Objective 1.3 – Everyone belongs

Strategy 1.3.9 - Promote Noongar language and culture (Subject to Reconciliation Action Plan)

Priority 2 – Natural Environment

Objective 2.1 – Protecting natural areas and biodiversity

Strategy 2.1.1 – Pursue revegetation and address weeds and other threats to native flora and fauna in partnership with Friends Groups, the wider community, government and non-government organisations

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The provision of an environmental themed art project for local primary schools across the Shire has social and environmental benefits.

RISK IMPLICATIONS

Risk: Reputation – lack of suitable primary school level supporting materials for exploring Aboriginal ecological knowledge		
Likelihood	Consequence	Rating
Unlikely	Minor	Low
Action / Strategy		
Collate suitable resource material to provide to schools to support the theme		

EXTERNAL CONSULTATION

Mundaring Arts Centre staff were consulted and are supportive of the theme. Confirming the theme in advance allows more time for the Mundaring Arts Centre to seek grants and additional funding to support the project and related activities.

COMMENT

The theme of 'Caring for Country' including Aboriginal ecological knowledge would respond to the community interest shown in the natural environment and Aboriginal cultural heritage during consultation to inform the Strategic Community Plan 2020-2030. It would also align with the Shire's preparation of a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) which was interrupted due to Covid-19 but will be progressed in 2021.

Shire staff have been collaborating with Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council (EMRC) staff and a local researcher to develop a citizen science fauna project which has now formed an application for State NRM funding. The envisaged project would extend and

expand the Quenda Search Project which has been supported by the Shire of Mundaring Libraries in 2020. If the grant application is successful then funding would be received by EMRC in 2021, for work including the production of local native mammal identification material that would include traditional names and information. This would add to the existing resources produced by the Noongar Boodjar Language Centre, South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare (e.g. SERCUL Noongar Posters), tree cards previously produced by the EMRC, and primary school age books such as *Djerap Noongar Birds*. Additional resources to support the theme can be identified by Shire and EMRC staff and Mundaring Arts Centre and provided to schools to encourage participation.

VOTING REQUIREMENT

Simple Majority

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION	EAC2.06.20
Moved by Mr Murphy	Seconded by Ms Byrne

That the Committee supports the Aboriginal ecological knowledge theme 'Caring for Country' for the 2021 Mundaring Environmental Art Project.

CARRIED 9/0

For: Mr Murphy, Ms Groom, Mr Hogarth, Mr Ragg, Mr Robertson, Mr Waite, Cr Jones, Ms Byrne and Dr Millett

Against: Nil

6.2 Friends Group Survey Results and Activities 2019

File Code	EV.RES 2.1
Author	Shane Purdy, Director Infrastructure Services
Senior Employee	Shane Purdy, Director Infrastructure Services
Disclosure of Any Interest	Nil
Attachments	Nil

SUMMARY

The survey results from 2019 showed the appreciation and continuing success of Shire assistance provided to volunteers who make up Friends Groups maintaining Reserves within the Shire.

Based on the Friends Group survey information, the 2019 year saw numbers of friends groups, numbers of members and plantings installed all notably increase. Groups who had never applied before for Swan Alcoa Landcare Program (SALP) grants were assisted through this process.

In addition the synergies available by co-ordinating activities when opportunities arise between the Shire's landcare team, weed control team, horticultural team, street tree crew, fire protection officers, schools, catchment groups and Friends Groups has been clearly evident with a significant amount of on ground works undertaken during 2019.

This outcome is a result of very good internal team work between the Shire's Environmental, Operations and Community Safety staff and successful working partnership with the EMRC under the co-ordination of the Supervisor Environment and Horticulture.

BACKGROUND

The Shire each year undertakes a survey of Friends Groups and obtains work plans from each for the following calendar year.

The survey enables an analysis of Friends Groups activities and of comments for potential improvements to Shire support going forward.

The work plans enable the Shire to organise assistance from the Shire's Landcare team, how funds for Friends Groups can be assigned and which groups need assistance with grant applications.

STATUTORY / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Shire's Environmental Sustainability Policy includes a number of biodiversity principles that relate to management of natural areas, including:

3.4. The Shire encourages enjoyment, environmental stewardship and care of natural areas by residents and community groups.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Funding and support for Friends Groups is provided by the Shire in various ways. This includes:

- funding for the two person Landcare team;
- funding for contractors or direct costs for Friends Group work plan activities;
- funds for bushland weed control and regeneration works;
- funding for the Eastern Catchment Management Program which provides human resources to assist regional catchment groups and individual local governments for various Landcare activity assistance such as landcare grant applications, grant project management, education (eg Bush skills for the Hills program), regional networking events and promotion (eg Greenpage publications); and
- Friends Groups can apply for seedlings through the Shire's Seedlings for Landcare program to assist with revegetation.

The collaboration across service areas also extends to the Shire's success in obtaining Department of Fire and Emergency Services funding for bushfire risk mitigation works. Woody weeds can be difficult for volunteers to remove and if left unmanaged can create both a bushfire and environmental threat. Mapping of woody weeds (such as eastern states wattles) in nature reserves has been used to obtain substantial funding for their removal from reserves in addition to traditional firebreak installation and fuel reduction.

Additional resources from the weed control team, fire protection officers and street tree crew can be engaged together with the already dedicated landcare team when synergies of effort and outcomes are beneficial within reserves.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

Mundaring Strategic Community Plan 2020 - 2030

Priority 2 - Natural Environment

Objective 2.1 – Protecting natural areas and biodiversity

Strategy 2.1.1 – Pursue revegetation and address weeds and other threats to native flora and fauna in partnership with Friends Groups, the wider community, government and non-government organisations

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Collaborating with environmental volunteers to obtain external grants and undertake on-ground works in conservation areas has social and environmental benefits. As noted above, support for environmental stewardship and care of natural areas by community groups is a principle of the Shire's Environmental Sustainability Policy.

RISK IMPLICATIONS

Risk: Inadequate assistance is provided to volunteers of Friends Groups causing a loss in numbers of volunteers		
Likelihood	Consequence	Rating
Unlikely	Moderate	Low

Action / Strategy

Continue with funding and support mechanisms for Friends Group activities

EXTERNAL CONSULTATION

The annual survey of Friends Groups has been undertaken for many years. The survey is voluntary and the Shire does not receive a response from every group every year. The results of surveys between 2016 and 2019 are described in the comment section below.

COMMENTSurvey Results

The results of the annual surveys over recent years is shown below;

	2019	2018	2017	2016
No. of Friends Groups responding	32	31	17	24
No of members	174	103	65	115
No of hours by volunteers	4110	2678	1257	2154
No of plantings	5149	1410	3050	2369

These results are variable from year to year and reflect if groups submit surveys, noting some can go inactive at times depending on the state of the Reserve and tasks to be undertaken.

Some Friends Groups are just a single person and some individuals are members of multiple Friends Groups. Therefore the number of members does not represent the total number of individuals whom participate in Friends Group activities.

However even after taking into account variations that can occur, the increase in reported activity for member numbers, hours of volunteering and seedlings planted for the 2019 year was very pleasing.

During 2019 the Shire's Landcare team was reported to have assisted 25 of the 32 groups. All but one group advised they were satisfied with help provided to their group from the Shire. This one group had marked yes and no to this question. Comments in relation to this group consisted of a perception of a decrease in Friends Group networking, lack of communication between Shire environment and fire staff, preference for a written budget, greater assistance with grant applications, prior notification if Shire is working in their Reserve and more face to face meetings with the Shire to enable prompter responses. Comments from the remaining 31 Groups however expressed thanks for Shire support and assistance or detailed the positive works their group had achieved for 2019.

The comments from the one group in relation to lack of communication and assistance with grants is not borne out in the information that follows under each sub heading. Sufficient funds exist to enable Friends Groups to undertake their works based on the submitted annual work plans. As these work plans can change considerably across all friends groups over a year, so funds need to be adaptable and used when actually needed and not just assigned as a budget amount to each group.

The Shire has an internal environmental working group that meets regularly so communication and discussion of activities across various internal service teams is achieved. Extra effort has been made to improve the Friends Group database of information and mapping. Given the volunteering nature, occasional overlapping of work

and irregular work that is undertaken by some groups this contact and mapping data is difficult to keep updated. By producing the large maps for use at networking events it is hoped this data will be more accurate so that should fire officers undertake works they are more likely to be able to contact the convenor of that Reserve.

Friends Groups and Catchment Groups

The total number of active Friends Groups on the Shire's contact list as at April 2020 is 68. In the past 12 months ten new Friends Groups were registered (six by Una Bell) with one having a new Friends Group Convenor. Of the 68 Friends Groups, six persons are Convenors of multiple groups totalling 23 Friends Groups. There is therefore 51 separate people making up the Friends Group Convenors of the 68 Groups.

Large plans of where these groups are located and whom the co-ordinator is will be displayed at the Committee meeting.

Work was undertaken to re-establish a catchment group for the Wooroloo Brook area. This work has started with a group formed as the Wooroloo Brook Landcare Group (consisting of residents from both City of Swan and Shire of Mundaring). It is hoped this group will eventually develop into a formal Catchment Group which is gaining traction with a number of persons expressing interest.

Grants

Five landcare projects in Perth's Eastern Region received grant funding assistance in 2019 for 2020, from funding available through the Western Australian State Natural Resource Management Program and the State Government's Community Rivercare Program. These recipients are below with the majority being within the Shire of Mundaring;

State Natural Resource Management Community Stewardship Grant Projects:

- Control of Geophyte Weeds in John Forrest National Park – Friends of John Forrest National Park
(Sponsored by Jane Brook Catchment Group)
- Broz Park Wetland Restoration Project – Shire of Mundaring

Community Rivercare Program Round 3 Projects:

- Restoration of Lion Mill Creek in Mount Helena – Friends of Lion Mill Creek
- Restoration of Wangalla Brook – Friends of Wangalla Brook
- Restoration of Helena River (West of Scott Street) – Katharine Street River Gang

The Friends of Black Cockatoo Reserve were successful in their partnership proposal with the Water Corporation to undertake an annual round of dieback treatment in their Reserves during 2019. They received \$9,735 excluding GST.

The Friends of Lion Mill Creek group was successful in their grant application to Bendigo Bank. They will receive \$900 for seedlings, tree guards, stakes and catering for a planting event which Bendigo Bank employees will assist with. In addition on Sunday 31 March a community planting day occurred with planting sedges along Lion Mill Creek as part of their Community Rivercare grant.

The Friends of Pioneer Park group accessed corporate volunteer support from BHP through the Community Rivercare Program. DBCA is helping groups to connect with corporate volunteers. The volunteers assisted with a weeding day in May 2019.

Work continued during 2019 on the Shire's \$32,500 State NRM Blackberry removal in sensitive water courses project.

The work plans submitted by Friends Groups for 2021 have been reviewed and potential groups were identified for assistance with grant applications.

Ultimately three groups applied for SALP 2021 funding for projects encompassing weed control, revegetation and community engagement in the Jane and Helena River catchments being:

- Friends of Pioneer Park – Heritage Trail Grass Project: Stoneville to Sexton – Amount requested: \$9,416.50 ex GST
- Friends of Falls Park – Jane Brook: Riparian Zone Restoration (Falls Park, Hovea) – Amount requested: \$4,493.00 ex GST
- Friends of Glen Park – Conservation and Preservation of Glen Park Reserve – Amount requested: \$19,996.00 ex GST

Two of these groups were applying for a grant for the first time and received substantial assistance.

Two groups are currently being assisted to prepare State NRM grant submissions focused on private landholder engagement, weed control and revegetation. These groups are Jane Brook Catchment Group and Friends of Falls Park.

The Friends of Black Cockatoo Reserves group were given assistance to reapply for dieback funding from the Water Corporation for 2020 when it was noted that this funding required an annual application. The Convenor had thought this funding was an ongoing arrangement, but checks from the Shire could only confirm an annual allocation for 2019 and therefore an offer of assistance to reapply again for the maximum funding amount of \$10,000 for 2020.

Events

There was a number of community events held to support Friends groups during 2019. Below is detail on some of the key activities.

Blue Sky Festival – Sunday 17 March 2019

- EMRC hosted a *Volunteering in Perth's Eastern Region* stall. Key messages presented included:
 - What is a catchment and how to Friends Groups link to Catchment Groups?
 - Identifying native grasses with Una Bell
 - Identifying local invasive weeds
 - Bush Skills 4 Youth activities
 - Promotion of the Wooroloo Brook catchment and the need for community engagement in NRM in this area.
- Six Catchment Groups and nine Friends Groups were showcased within the stall, including eight Friends Groups working within the SoM:
 - Friends of:
 - Lion Mill Creek
 - Pioneer Park
 - Black Cockatoo Reserves
 - Blue Wren Reserve
 - Boya Trail
 - The Flooded Gum (private landholders)

- John Forrest National Park (DBCA land)
- Katharine Street River Gang (DBCA/private land)
- 17 group volunteers assisted at the stall across the course of the day. Feedback indicated they really appreciated the opportunity to network with other group members and members of the public.
- Three community members registered their interest in Wooroloo Brook and the potential for a Catchment Group to form. A grant was subsequently received to assist community engagement in the Wooroloo Brook catchment.
- Over 50 new people subscribed to the Greenpage newsletter at the event.

End of Year Volunteer Event

The end of year Friends group volunteer event attended by around 120 people was held on 29 November 2019 at Chapel Farm to give thanks to all of the land carers in Perth's Eastern Region.

Bush Skills for the Hills

There were eight bush skills for the hills events undertaken in 2019. Topics covered were;

1. Greencard Training
2. Plant Me Instead (using native plants in your garden)
3. Close Encounters (encouraging healthy wildlife interactions)
4. Monitoring Techniques
5. Dieback Treatment Training
6. Carnivorous Plants workshop
7. Black Cockatoo Reserves (showcasing the work of the Black Cockatoo Friends Group)
8. Native Grasses by Una Bell

Trillion Trees

A Friends Group thank you event was held at Trillion Trees organised by the Shire of Mundaring with the Cities of Kalamunda and Swan. Based on feedback a networking event specific to Mundaring is under consideration and planning. These events are currently hampered by COVID-19 restrictions.

Community Planting Days

Community planting days were held on a Saturday at Cooke's Brooke and two were held at Lion Mill Creek (one in March and one in June).

Friends Group manual

A notable achievement during 2019 was the updating of the Friends Group manual which was sent out to all groups as part of the annual survey process. This manual, last updated in 2003, is an excellent source of information for friend's group convenors and members and would be members.

Reserve Management Plans

Assistance is being given to the Black Cockatoo Reserve group to finalise an Interim Reserve Management Plan previously commenced as an example plan template to enable the group to be better placed to apply for grants.

The plan will be interim due to a need to resolve a number of additional matters. More recently the recommendations of the Priority Reserves Ecological Assessment Report 2018 included the following:

Reserve management plans should be developed or updated for high priority reserves to integrate Dieback control, weed management, bushfire risk management and other Shire activities.

In exploring the need for a consolidated Biodiversity Strategy (2019-2021), it also became apparent that a more holistic approach to Reserve Management Plans, that reconcile various environmental, bushfire safety and community objectives, is now required.

The convenor of Black Cockatoo Reserve is to be commended for her assistance in this process, and once a final plan is developed this will be a template for future plans. Options for further improvements for reserve management and encouraging custodianship of natural areas will be considered during development of the Local Biodiversity Strategy.

VOTING REQUIREMENT

Simple Majority

COMMITTEE DECISION RECOMMENDATION	EAC3.06.20
Moved by Mr Ragg	Seconded by Dr Millett

That the Committee notes the good survey results and activities for 2019 and the continuing success of volunteerism in Friends Groups of bush reserves and the positive feedback to assistance provided by the Shire to these volunteers.

CARRIED 9/0

For: Mr Murphy, Ms Groom, Mr Hogarth, Mr Ragg, Mr Robertson, Mr Waite, Cr Jones, Ms Byrne and Dr Millett

Against: Nil

7.0 URGENT BUSINESS (LATE REPORTS)

Nil

8.0 CLOSING PROCEDURES

8.1 Date, Time and Place of the Next Meeting

The next Environmental Advisory Committee will be held on Wednesday 19 August 2020 at 6.00pm in the Committee Room, 7000 Great Eastern Highway, Mundaring.

8.2 Closure of the Meeting

The Presiding Person declared the meeting closed at 7.05pm.