

# Minutes



## Coastal Open Space System (COSS) Advisory Committee

**Date:** 7 June 2022

**Time:** 2.04pm – 4.01pm

**Location:** Microsoft Teams

**Chairperson:** James Lawson, Unit Manager Environmental Management (Acting)

**Coordinator:** James Lawson, Unit Manager Environmental Management (Acting)

### Attendance

#### Members:

John Andrews

Deb Holloman

Paul Links

Douglas Williamson

Barbara Wills

Gary Chestnut (Knowledge specialist, non-voting)

#### Status:

Present

Present

Apology

Present (arrived 2.06pm)

Present

Present

#### External Agencies:

Stephen Atkins, NPWS

David Green, LLS

Present

Apology for start of meeting expected after 3pm)

#### Staff:

Alice Howe, Director Environment and Planning (until 2.30pm)

James Lawson, Unit Manager Environmental Management (Acting)

Luke Sulkowski, Unit Manager Environmental Compliance and Systems

Larry Melican, Section Manager Natural Assets and Biodiversity

Rochelle Lawson, Senior Ecologist

Michael Smith, Team Leader Landcare

Nick Carson, Environmental Education Officer

Carlita Dhillon, Environmental Education Officer

Paul Marynissen, Biosecurity Officer, Weeds

Stewart Newman, Biosecurity Officer, Weeds

Rachel Callachor, Meeting Support Officer

Maggie Rowland, Civic Support Officer

Present

Present

Apology

Apology

Present

Present

Present for item 7

Present

Present

Absent

Present

Present

### 1 Introduction

2.04pm

The chairperson welcomed the group and completed an Acknowledgement of Country.

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## Coastal Open Space System (COSS) Advisory Committee

Apologies received were noted.

The chairperson called for any disclosures of interest. No disclosures were received.

Dr Alice Howe, Director Environment and Planning was welcomed to the meeting. Alice introduced herself and expressed appreciation to all members contribution to the COSS Committee.

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### 2 Previous business

2.08pm

The group confirmed the minutes from the previous meeting as noted below, which were distributed to members via email and uploaded to Council's website:

[15 March 2022 – Coastal Open Space System Committee Meeting Minutes](#)

The action log was reviewed with updates recorded (see page 9).

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### 3 Potential Transfer of COSS Lands to National Parks Wildlife Services (NPWS)

2.20pm

Update provided by Michael Smith, Team Leader Landcare. Presentation included the following key points:

- Background provided on the proposal provided, October 2019 – April 2022
- Background of item/s before the COSS committee regarding these matters.
- Update regarding Council resolution 26 April 2022. Including short term and long term actions. Formal advice will be sought from the COSS Committee prior to the report going to Council.

Michael Smith called for any questions on this agenda item and a Committee member advised they would like to register disagreement that the COSS Committee would agree to this proposal.

Specifically, regarding the National Parks position regarding mountain bike/down hill riding and to voice concerns regarding how the land will be used, as well as the income/asset base for the COSS committee, in relation to the subdivision and legal costs.

Response from Alice Howe, Director Environment and Planning – Advised there is no presumption about the views of the COSS Committee, and Council wishes to bring this information to the Committee to hear their views. Conversations to be had with Central Coast Council and National Parks. Alice feels that this meeting could be used to articulate any issues and that these matters can be revisited in September COSS meeting as well.

**Action:** Presentations to be distributed to Advisory Group members.

### 4 Biosecurity COSS Update

2.32pm

Presentation by Paul Marynissen, Biosecurity Officer, Weeds. Key points included:

#### What's new in weeds:

- 'Fever tree'. Background and information regarding this weed. Blackwall and Ettalong. Has since been found in Sydney as well.
- 'Skunk Vine' – Background and information regarding this weed. Found in Woongarra (this has not yet flowered) and has grown-over native vegetation.
- 'Frogbit' - Background and information regarding this weed. Plan of action created, under control with the land owner. As this is a prohibited plant, monthly inspections are carried out, to keep this controlled and suppressed.
- Update provided regarding recent inspections undertaken.
- Update regarding CCC staff in attendance at Central Coast Show, 30 April – 1 May. Good community participation and feedback, despite the weather. Approximately 400 people attended the stall.
- Following recent floods, there will be inspections in the Gunderman and Spencer areas, including drone inspections.

**Action:** Presentations to be distributed to Advisory Group members.

### 5 Update on Biodiversity Strategy and land acquisition and prioritisation (standing agenda item)

2.46pm

Verbal update provided by Rochelle Lawson, Senior Ecologist. Key points included:

- This year's Bush regeneration program is coming to a close, end of financial year.
- Recently was one year since the inception of the Glenning Valley program / Stewardship agreement.
- Tumbi Umbi and Bluehaven wetlands are due to be assessed and eligibility checks to be undertaken, before they can be listed.

### 6 Environmental Volunteering Program

2.47pm

Presentation by Michael Smith, Team Leader Landcare. Key points included:

- Information regarding the programs and activities run pre amalgamation, background and origin, Landcare and Bushcare. Upon amalgamation these became Central Coast Landcare program.
- Snapshot of record keeping systems, regarding volunteer database and work undertaken. Harmonising risk management systems.
- Record of site programs/strategies and the development of the environmental management plan. Assessing flora and fauna, aboriginal heritage to form these strategies.
- Program review and group definitions:
  - Amenity groups- eg Tidy Towns and Cemeteries Groups. Garden maintenance, lawn mowing etc.
  - Technical Groups – seed collectors, nurse volunteers, fauna monitoring.
  - Short term groups – e.g National Tree Day, Planting Events and this also includes Corporate Volunteering (planting events) by organisations.
- Snapshot provided regarding volunteer statistics, including demographics, years of service volunteering, number of groups the volunteers work with and meeting frequency.
- Background of program strategy: Councillor Workshop in 2019 – through to adoption in May 2020. There was recruitment of additional officers.
- Bench marking exercise with Councils in the area and in Sydney, surrounds and Port Macquarie/Hastings.
- Environmental Volunteer Program strategy overview, including follow up activities undertaken with volunteers if inactive after 12 months to try to keep them engaged and involved in the program.
- Environmental Volunteer Program, Current Status – 78 Groups, 2 National Tree Day Events, 12 Floating Landcare Events, 673 Active Volunteers, CCC staff: 1 Team Leader, 4 Officers, 1 Administration Officer (Part time role).
- Impacts on the program – Council’s Financial crisis, service level reductions and overtime restrictions (now looking at outsourcing options), Covid-19 – program was suspended twice due to lockdown measures in greater Sydney. Program was re-introduced in line with NSW health guidelines. Workshops and training events have also been put on hold. Weather and

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rain has also effected work in bush regeneration space.

- Summary of Recent achievements – across Floating Landcare (events through the Central Coast to provide conservation actions at difficult-to-access sites), National Tree Day, Financial support and sponsorship, as well as Corporate Volunteering.
- Noted a Quarterly e-newsletter – Environmental Volunteer Program.
- Currently working on a filming project. Since late April there has been a video prepared, conservation and technical groups footage, film maker putting together video which will go online, including photography. Expected completion by end of June.  
A short film has been completed, will be used as part of National Volunteer Week. This was shown to the group.

Question from Chairperson – Noting that the last survey was undertaken in April 2019, have there been or are there any follow ups scheduled?

Response from Team Leader Landcare to advise that, not as yet, and the feedback from groups is that survey of views is not readily sought as a feedback and information gathering mechanism, but suggests a survey every 5 years would be beneficial, to get a broad overview.

Question from Committee member - Regarding Council Nursey, no longer providing trees/native trees to residents, which can also be a benefit to overcome weed infestation.

Response from Team Leader Landcare – Not at this stage, former Gosford City Council (GCC) initiative, current plants are provided to community groups and looking to expand to provide to school groups.

**Action:** Chair will seek advice from Team Leader Landcare and SM Natural Assets and Biodiversity regarding whether this is to be re-introduced.

**Action:** Presentations to be distributed to Advisory Group members.

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### 7 Council Initiative – QR Codes Update and Presentation from the Australian Environmental Education Association 3.09pm

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Presentation by Carlita Dhillon and Nick Carson.

Key topics covered:

- QR codes – how Council is currently using these and information provided regarding the data can be extracted and graphed overtime, as well as way to provide links to relevant websites.
  - Example: QR code which was linked to a map of Kincumba Mountain Reserve map. Different times it is accessed, which types of technology have accessed. Interpretive signs – e.g Brisbane Water Saltmarsh.
  - Printed handbooks and brochures contain QR codes as well – handed out at events. A way to quickly and directly get to the websites/relevant information.
  - Utilising the work of other councils – for e.g. Lake Macquarie and QR code-guided walking tour of the site and detailing the work that has been done by the Landcare volunteers. Included audio tour.
  - Next steps and future use re: developing options for future use, tracking, audio/visual – as detailed above.
  - New signage which includes QR codes, and updates including Rumbalara and Kincumba Mountain.
  - Other opportunities – Adobe Aero, Overlay – augmented reality experiences, for the general public and students.
  - For example, if not able see wildlife in person, can use the technology for 3D images of the animals, or historical buildings/use/history, etc. information regarding preservation efforts.
  
- Australian Association for Environmental Education (AAEE) is the peak professional body for Environmental Educators.
  - Recently, over the past month, the NSW conference was held on the central coast, at Ourimbah Uni. Delivered and organised by Nick, Carlita and Ashley Kelly. Background around organisation and rescheduling from November 2021. Council staff also hosted some of the workshops.
  - 99 participants attended from over NSW and interstate. Schools, early childhood education, LG and other industries. Council helped deliver and organise. This included other events, including Networking events.  
attendance at 'Resilient Sydney' Conference

**Action:** Refresher regarding opportunities for committee members to become involved, suggestions and feedback welcomed, please send via *AdvisoryGroups* email address.

Question from Chair – Query regarding AAEE conference and how often it is held. Advised there is normally a conference every year, alternates. Bi-annual between States and National level, COVID permitting. Both conferences ended up happening this year, a result of COVID disruptions, this may continue again next year, but then alternate years. This setup reduces

impact on those wishing to travel and attend. Central Coast Council staff attend most years, and also speak, plus involvement with organisation across these events, on a volunteer basis.

**Action:** Presentations to be distributed to Advisory Group members.

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### 8 Biobanking Update and POET Trust Fund Projects Update

3.30pm

Two items funded:

Rumbalara Biodiversity Agreement, 2015

- 1 Weed Control –
  - year 1 2015. By year 5 all primary weed control had been completed.
  - Weed density < 10 percent across site by Year 7, majority < 1 percent
  - Management plan reviewed
  - Six focus areas for follow-up control for next 5 years with monitoring plots established.
- 2 Revegetation
- 3 Feral animal and vertebrate pest animal control. – primarily foxes. Undertake surveillance , ground baiting, ground shooting. Protection species monitoring.
- 4 Managing human disturbance – 1.4km boundary fencing installed, .0.9 km boundary marked with posts, 18 signs installed, 400m track repaired, waste removal.
- 5 Ecological fire management.
- 6 Annual monitoring and reporting.

The Protection of the Environment Trust (PoET) was received for:

- 1 Scenic Road reserve offset and Cullens Road bushland reserve
- 2 Umina Coastal Sandplain Woodland included priority sites of Burrawang Reserve, McEvoy Oval and Umina Oval and Drainage Reserve.

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### 9 Update from external representatives (standing agenda item)

3.50pm

Workshops coming up.

Recently involved at:

- Harvest Festival event. Involved in feral animal control. A deer shoot was conducted with Council. A wild dog and fox bating program is underway.
- End of Financial Year activities.

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### 10 Update from Community representatives

3.54pm

Stephen Atkins (NPWS) provided an update, which included information regarding:

- Coordinated aerial base program regarding bating of foxes.
- Aerial spraying in Bouddi National Park.
- NPWS continue to respond to damage from rainfall events from this year.
- There have been a number of land slips, restricted access in bush trails. Infrastructure projects continue to progress.
- Forestry Corporation have transferred a number of parcels to National Parks.
- Bouddi tracks ready for completion next month.
- Due to the weather no burns have been able to be completed.

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### 11 General business

4.00pm

Barbara Wills advised Alice Howe will get back to us regarding purchasing of outstanding lands.

Gary Chesnut complimented staff of the quality of the presentations.

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### 12 Close

Next meeting: 6 September 2022  
2pm – 4pm

Meeting closed at 4.01pm

Minutes finalised and endorsed 16/02/2022 by  
James Lawson

**Acting Unit Manager Environmental Management  
Coordinator/Chairperson**



# Action log

## Coastal Open Space System (COSS) Committee



132	9/6/2021	The Committee request the Project Manager provide a briefing on the airport masterplan, plan of management and subdivision plan at the next meeting.	Unit Manager Environmental Management	Airport Masterplan update emailed to members 14 February 2022. Verbal update provided at 15 March 2022 meeting.	Complete
139	21/9/2021	Luke Sulkowski to confirm whether the letter sent from Council to National Parks is able to be distributed and will review what information has previously been provided to the COSS Committee regarding this matter.	Unit Manager Environmental Management	The Land Transfer Council to National Parks Chronology was discussed at the 13 December 2021 COSS meeting. Amy Walpole to double check, it seems we may have already provided a copy of the letter to the Minister/National Parks.  16/02: LM to reconfirm that a copy of the letter was circulated to the committee  Update as at 07/06/2022 meeting: Follow up regarding letter and circulation to Committee.	Pending
140	21/9/2021	Section Manager Flood Strategy and Planning to obtain more information regarding the two Conservation Areas and provide feedback to Gary Chestnut.	Section Manager Flood Strategy and Planning	Peter Sheath to provide an update on this matter.  Update May 2022 and current as at 07/06/2022 meeting : An update was provided by Mr Chestnut, to Peter Sheath. Ongoing.	Pending

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141	21/9/2021	Staff to provide a presentation to the Committee at a future meeting on the way these property sale negotiations are carried out and possible new ways of thinking for Council negotiating on land that has high environmental values.	Unit Manager Economic Development and Property	<p>Larry Melican is awaiting a response from the Economic Development and Property Team and will hopefully have information to report back to the next meeting.</p> <p>Update as at 07/06/2022 meeting: Larry Melican to follow up with EDP.</p>	Pending
143	21/9/2021	Staff to investigate the unauthorised clearing activities at Matcham and report back to the next COSS meeting advising what action has been taken against the people who undertook the clearing.	Unit Manager Environmental Management	<p>A registered surveyor was engaged to Council to carry out a boundary survey to ascertain the extent of clearing on Council land reserve, R0056 Wambina/Matcham Road Reserve. This survey was undertaken on the 26<sup>th</sup> October 2021.</p> <p>On the 8 December 2022 an onsite meeting was held with Council officers Rhys Richards, Team Leader, Development Control, Brent Evans, Project Officer, Natural Assets and Biodiversity and Chris Ross a representative of the owners of 293 Matcham Road.</p> <p>The representative was asked to provide a Vegetation Management Plan which is</p>	Complete

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				<p>to outline how they are to revegetate/regenerate/manage the area that they have admitted to clearing. It is understood that the representative has sourced three quotes from qualified ecologists to carry out the investigation and provide the Vegetation Management Plan and have now engaged Travers Bushfire and Ecology to provide the consultancy services. This plan is to be reviewed by Council before it is accepted. Once accepted the representative has stated that they will then carry out the recommendations of the report.</p> <p>It is expected that the draft plan will be available for review in the next few weeks.</p>	
144	13/12/2021	In regard to previous action 124, Council to send a follow up letter to the Minister advising of the significant community concerns regarding the clearing of land (public and private) and request that if the legislation isn't going to be changed, that regulatory control of deferred matters zoned land be given back to Council as opposed to DPIE and LLS.	Unit Manager Environmental Management	<p>At the 8 February 2022 Council Meeting, Council resolved:</p> <p>That Council send a follow up letter to the Minister advising of the significant community concerns regarding the clearing of land (public and private) and request that if the legislation isn't going to be changed, that regulatory control of deferred matters zoned land be given back to Council as opposed to DPIE and LLS. Letters sent 2 March 2022 to</p>	Complete

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				Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Planning and Homes.	
145	13/12/2021	The Coastal Open Space System (COSS) Committee members would like to express to Council their rejection of any mountain biking trails being established in COSS land or being identified for inclusion in COSS land as part of the Central Coast Mountain Biking Plan which will be reported to Council at the Ordinary Meeting on 14 December 2021.	The Committee	<p>At the 14 December 2021 Council Meeting, Council resolved the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That Council endorse the report on community consultation undertaken for the Mountain Bike Feasibility Study Discussion Paper.</li> <li>2. That Council endorse the development of a Central Coast Mountain Biking Plan, led by Council staff in collaboration with an active stakeholder working group, to establish a strategic framework and select suitable sites, and that the project be considered for funding through Council's budgetary processes, which may include applying for external funding from grants, developer contributions or cost or service reductions.</li> <li>3. That Council recognises the risk of harm to the environment, heritage, and public safety from unauthorised trail construction on Council land and that</li> </ol>	Complete

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				<p>education, enforcement and trail closures will be an ongoing responsibility of Council in order to manage risks. However improved outcomes for reserve management will be reliant on a proactive approach to increase supply at suitable sites due to limited enforcement resources and the size of the region.</p> <p>4. That Council staff investigate the feasibility of, and issues with, constructing dirt jumps on suitable Council land and provide a report back to Council.</p> <p>5. That Council staff notify those people who lodged submissions and relevant stakeholders of Council's resolution.</p> <p>The 13 December 2021 COSS meeting minutes expressing rejection of any mountain biking trails being established in COSS land were reported to the 8 February 2022 Council Meeting. Council noted the minutes and made the following resolution in regard to the Committees recommendation around Mountain Biking:</p>	
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## Coastal Open Space System (COSS) Committee



				That Council note the COSS Committee's rejection of any mountain biking trails being established in COSS land or being identified for inclusion in COSS land as part of the Central Coast Mountain Biking Plan that was reported to Council at the Ordinary Meeting on 14 December 2021.	
147	13/12/2021	Staff to follow up with the Economic and Property Development team request that they meet with the COSS Sub-Committee to discuss property sale negotiations and the acquisition process, prior to presenting to the Committee in the new year.	Unit Manager Environmental Management	Larry Melican to follow up with Economic Development and Property team.  Update as at 07/06/2022: Larry Melican to follow up with EPD	Pending
148	13/12/2021	The Committee request that Council write to the Minister noting concerns about lots that were left off the list for potential land transfer to NPWS and request that further consideration be given to private land, not just public land. Furthermore, representations should be made to local members requesting support of this.	Unit Manager Environmental Management	At the 8 Feb 2022 Council Meeting, Council resolved: That Council write to the Minister noting concerns about lots that were left off the list for potential land transfer to NPWS and request that further consideration be given to private land, not just public land. Furthermore, representations should be made to local members requesting support of this. Letters sent 2 March 2022 to Minister for Environment and Heritage, The Member for Terrigal, The Member for Gosford, The Member	Complete

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				for The Entrance and The Member for Wyong. Acknowledgement letters received from The Member for The Entrance advising he will also write to the Minister.	
149	13/12/2021	Staff to arrange a further meeting with Gary Chestnut with a view to identifying some existing conservation reserves in the former Wyong LGA that may be considered for trial under the COSS branding and to identify likely tasks required in order to proceed with such a project.	Unit Manager Environmental Management	Staff are liaising with Gary Chestnut to arrange a time suitable to him.  Update as at 07/06/2022 meeting - to be rescheduled upon return by staff from leave.	Pending
150	15/03/2022	Staff to collate a list of initiatives taken by Council in regard to QR codes and provide an update to the Committee at the next meeting. Consideration to also be given to other possible applications and software (e.g. Hovr).	Unit Manager Environmental Management	Update provided at 07/06/2022 Committee meeting and outcomes included in meeting minutes	Complete
151	15/03/2022	Committee members are invited to provide any suggestions or feedback on the plan to advisorygroups@centralcoast.nsw.gov.au by Friday 25 March 2022.	The Committee	<i>COSS Committee - NAB Environmental Education Strategy</i> emailed to members 18/3/2022  Update provided to Carlita Dhillon and Nick Carson via email 30/3/2022 – final confirmation of all feedback received – one email from Gary Chestnut.	Complete

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152	15/03/2022	Copies of the letters sent to Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Planning and Homes regarding Deferred Matters Land to be sent to Adam Crouch, Parliamentary Secretary for the Central Coast and Member for Terrigal, for his information.	Unit Manager Environmental Management	Status as at 07/06/2022 – Ongoing. To be clarified upon return by Larry from leave and info to be provided.	Pending
153	15/03/2022	A copy of all presentations from today's meeting to be provided to Committee Members.	Meeting Support Officer	<i>COSS Committee Presentations</i> emailed to members 16/03/2022	Complete
154	07/06/2022	A copy of all presentations from today's meeting to be provided to Committee Members.	Meeting Support Officer		Pending
155	07/06/2022	Refresher regarding opportunities for committee members to become involved, suggestions and feedback welcomed, please send via <i>AdvisoryGroups</i> email address.	COSS Committee members		Pending
156	07/06/2022	Chair will seek advice from Team Leader Landcare and SM Natural Assets and Biodiversity regarding whether this is to be re-introduced.	Unit Manager Environmental Management		Pending