

Minutes



Coastal Open Space System (COSS) Advisory Committee

Date: 13 December 2021

Time: 1.01pm – 3.37pm

Location: Microsoft Teams

Chairperson: Luke Sulkowski, Unit Manager Environmental Management

Coordinator: Luke Sulkowski, Unit Manager Environmental Management

Attendance

Members:

John Andrews

David Holland

Deb Holloman

Paul Links

Douglas Williamson

Barbara Wills

Gary Chestnut (Knowledge specialist, non-voting)

Status:

Present

Apology

Present

Present

Apology

Present

Present

External Agencies:

Andrew Bayley, NPWS

David Green, LLS

Present

Present

Guests:

Anu Vijayan, Master of Research, Macquarie University

Present

Staff:

Luke Sulkowski, Unit Manager Environmental Management

Larry Melican, Section Manager Natural Assets and Biodiversity

Rochelle Lawson, Senior Ecologist

Sharyn Styman, Environmental Management and Projects

Officer

Kelly Drover, Meeting Support Officer

Present

Present

Present

Present

Present

1 Introduction

1.01pm

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

Apologies received were noted.

The chairperson called for any disclosures of interest.

In regard to Item 8, Comparison between CEN COSS Report and Central Coast Biodiversity Strategy, Gary Chestnut declared a significant non-pecuniary interest as he submitted a Comparison report to the Unit Manager Environmental Management and is also a member of the CEN Executive. Gary is not a voting member on the Committee so was able to partake in discussion for this item.

2 Previous business

1.02pm

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, subject to the following changes:

[21 September 2021 Coastal Open Space System Committee Meeting Minutes](#)

- Removing specific people's names in comments made in General Business.
- Including comments regarding COSS land at Matcham as follows:
Members of the community have inspected COSS land at Matcham which was alleged to have been subject to unauthorised clearing activities and are of the belief that it has impacted COSS land.

Action: 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.

The action log was reviewed with updates recorded (see page 10).

Recommendation: 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.

Action 140 – Peter Sheath has been in contact with Gary Chestnut and an email with additional information was sent from Gary, awaiting a response. Staff to follow up with Peter Sheath.

3 Mountain Bike Feasibility Study Report

1.15pm

Sharyn Styman (Environmental Management and Projects Officer) provided an update on the Mountain Bike Feasibility Study Discussion Paper including the following:

- Supply analysis
- Community consultation
- Case studies

- Site selection criteria
- Feasibility analysis and conclusions

Public exhibition of the discussion paper and preparation of a report on the outcomes of the community consultation has been completed.

A video overview of the information presented in the discussion paper was available on YourVoiceOurCoast along with a guided submission form. The guided submission form focused on four areas:

- Views and attitudes
- Site selection criteria
- Management options
- Recommendations

The Mountain Bike Feasibility Study Consultation is being reported to the 14 December 2021 Ordinary Council meeting and can be found linked below:

- [14 December 2021 Council Meeting Agenda](#)
- [MTB Discussion Paper Consultation Final Report and Discussion Paper](#)

John Andrews wished to express his concerns regarding Mountain Biking on the Central Coast as a COSS Committee member of more than 10 years. He believes it has been an ongoing issue and mountain bike riding is not compatible with COSS land and that people have the option to pay to do it on private land.

Recommendation: 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.

4 Update on Biodiversity Strategy (standing agenda item)

2.02pm

Rochelle Lawson (Senior Ecologist) provided an update on the Biodiversity Strategy including the following:

Action 1.2.1: Implement site management plans to rehabilitate degraded bushland and coastal ecosystems – the 21/22 program included 37 of our priority reserves covering almost 1400 hectares and includes a program of bush regeneration works from Jilliby in the north to Rumbalara in the south.

The hollow bearing tree relocation funded by Local Land Services is likely to be completed this week.

5 Land acquisition and prioritisation (standing agenda item)

2.05pm

Rochelle Lawson (Senior Ecologist) provided an update on land acquisition and prioritisation.

The Land Acquisition program has effectively been on hold since the financial crisis. In 2021, there was a transfer of 7 parcels of Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) land at Green Point and Erina to Council's ownership. Also, Council purchased a parcel that was added to a reserve in Tumbi Umbi (Eric Malouf Close). A Biodiversity Stewardship Agreement for two reserves (Bomaderry Cres R0345, Bundeena Road Reserve R0346) was completed in July 2021 and annual payments are expected to begin in 2022.

Action: A map of the Glenning Valley reserves and Biodiversity Stewardship Agreement Council Report to be distributed to Committee members.

The Committee discussed a property at 194 Matcham Road, Matcham, 15.4hectares of a treed ridgeline which adjoins to existing COSS lands and was sold 12 months ago for \$2.1Million. It was noted that this would have been an ideal parcel for COSS acquisition.

There was an action from the 21 September 2021 meeting as follows:

Staff to provide an update to the Committee on the sale of 71 Debenham Road.

Larry Melican provided the following update:

- The site is 5.66hectares and is a Deferred Matters Zone which was identified for COSS acquisition.
- The Valuer General had valued the land at \$606,000 on 1 September 2019.
- Council received a valuation on 29 July 2020 at \$340,000 with assessment that marketability was fair to poor.
- The property had been on the market since September 2019 for \$600,000.
- A letter of offer went to the owners on 6 August 2020 for \$340,000. No response was received.
- The property was sold on 5 July 2021 for \$500,000.

The Committee expressed concerns that Council didn't obtain a proper valuation of the land and there are considerable flaws in the land acquisition process that are resulting in valuable conservation land not being acquired. It was suggested that Section 149 requests (which do identify parcels considered

for proposed COSS acquisition) could somehow trigger an alert that this property is earmarked for Council purchase.

Action: Staff to follow up with the Economic and Property Development team and 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.

Item 6 was brought forward ahead of item 4. Anu Vijayan attended for Item 6 and left at the conclusion of this item.

6 Journal of Environmental Management Paper

1.39pm

Anu Vijayan, Master of Research, Macquarie University provided the Committee with a presentation on the Journal of Environmental Management paper completed as part of a Master of Research project that Rochelle was Co-Supervisor of.

The presentation on Land use planning to support climate change adaptation in threatened plant communities included the following key items:

- Purpose of the study
- Climate Change
- Climate refugia
- Threatened plant communities
- Multi species refugia modelling
- Land use change
- Development pressure on refugia
- Recommendations

7 Land transfer Council to National Parks

2.35pm

Larry Melican (Section Manager Natural Assets and Biodiversity) provided the Committee with an overview of the chronology of events that was circulated to the Committee with the agenda on Potential Land Transfer to NPWS.

At the last meeting the Committee had expressed concerns that they weren't being kept informed of negotiations with National Parks with the lands to be transferred to National Parks estates.

There is a detailed process to work through in determining which parcels of land are suitable to be transferred to NPWS including making sure the land is up to a particular standard and if not whether there are actions that can be taken to improve the condition of it. The NPWS Reserve Establishment

Team have considered things like encumbrances that may be on the land, desktop analysis was completed however with the majority of parcels that were of interest, they were inspected on the ground and there is a plan in place for further inspections to be carried out in the new year.

The Committee expressed concerns regarding the lots that were left off the list proposed to the Minister, in particular a private lot at Bensville, which has National Parks on one side and Council reserves on the other side, and this lot remains a vital link between the North.

Recommendation: 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.

8 Comparison between CEN COSS Report and Central Coast Council Biodiversity Strategy

2.43pm

There was an action from the 21 September 2021 meeting as follows:

The Comparison undertaken by CEN of the COSS Report of Council's Biodiversity Strategy to be circulated to Committee members. Unit Manager Environmental Management to investigate the option of an Extraordinary Meeting to discuss the report.

A decision was made to discuss the item at today's ordinary meeting rather than hold an extraordinary meeting for this item.

The majority of recommendations from the CEN COSS report and Council's response were noted and agreed upon, however the Committee discussed at length the matter of evaluating land suitable for consideration to expand the Coastal Open Space System into the former Wyong Shire Council Local Government Area. It was noted that in a meeting with Gary Chestnut and the Administrator, the Administrator had noted he was happy to be presented with a list of parcels of land that could be identified as COSS, provided it did not include any additional land that Council does not already manage.

Action: Staff to arrange a further meeting with Gary Chestnut with a view to identifying some existing natural assets and other 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.

David Green – LLS

- LLS have had a meeting with Council staff regarding koalas on the Central Coast and song metres used to record the sound of male koalas. There was discussion around applying for funding through the environmental restoration fund on behalf of Council however LLS are not in a position to do that at this stage.
- LLS have applied for funding under the Environmental Trust for Grey Headed Flying Fox which focuses on the colony at North Avoca and also provides funding to automate the misting system at Wyoming.
- Currently working with Rochelle on a video for the hollow bearing tree relocation.
- Dog baiting project has been completed for the year.
- Staff recently captured 4 cane toads in a nursery at Kenthurst which were identified as coming down from Queensland.
- Currently liaising with Walk about Wildlife park regarding cultural burning. 2 other burns are planned for Baines Road, Mangrove Mountain in Autumn however they are highly dependent on the weather.
- Local Land Services office has moved from Wyong to Albany Street North in Gosford.

Andrew Baylee - NPWS

- There hasn't been much of a fire season this year which has allowed for prescribed burns during spring with 6 completed in the Central Coast LGA.
- A few cultural burns planned, one outside of the Central Coast LGA, another at Daley's Point in Bouddi National Park.
- Starting to get a lot of the volunteer programs back up and running that were paused due to Covid which involves work with risk planning and getting volunteers back into reserves for bush regeneration work.
- An aerial baiting program targeting wild dogs and foxes occurred throughout October in the Watagans, Jiliby State Conservation Area and for the first time included Brisbane Water National Park and Popran National Park.
- NPWS was part of a large capital program that the Government embarked upon to do with asset renewal in National Parks. Stage 3 of the Bouddi Coastal track has been completed and background work has commenced for Stage 4 to begin in the new year.
- Close to having the planning phase completed for Somersby Falls which involves renewal of amenities at the top of the falls, BBQ areas etc with work commencing early 2022.
- Crackneck lookout planning phase has also been completed which involved community consultation as well as discussion with Council's Disability Inclusion Officer to ensure access requirements were factored in.
- NPWS has been lucky to have a top of in funding to start targeting a lot of weed areas that have been identified as we haven't been able to do as much with volunteers due to Covid. Hopeful that this will be incorporated into normal works with field staff.

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Coastal Open Space System (COSS) Advisory Committee

- NPWS has a cycling policy and strategy currently on public exhibition till end of January 2022. National Parks are also experiencing an uptake in mountain bike activities and illegal trail construction has continued.

10 General business

3.19pm

- a) The Committee discussed land at Wambina Rd, Matcham. Staff had attended the site to identify where the boundary of land is between public and private land. More recently with the assistance of compliance officers, the land owner had been contacted and requested to prepare a bush land management plan to be implemented at their cost to rehabilitate the site that has been impacted.
- b) The Committee expressed their extreme disappointment about the sale of land at Thompson Vale Road, Doyalson to pay off Council debt. The Committee had reinforced the conservation values of the land and on a number of occasions had expressed concerns and requested that it be removed from sale however it appears these concerns and comments have not been considered.
- c) The Committee discussed the recent intrusion into COSS land adjoining private parcels by private landowners/managers.
- d) The Committee discussed meeting location moving forward due to the sale of the Gosford Administration Building. Some Committee Members expressed their frustration that there will no longer be a meeting venue available on the southern end of the Central Coast for these Advisory Group meetings.

It was agreed that meetings would proceed in hybrid format with the Wyong Committee room being available to meet however members are more than welcome to continue to join via Microsoft Teams if that option is more convenient.

- e) Luke Sulkowski advised of staffing changes in the new year. He will be moving across to Environmental Compliance and Systems Unit due to a resignation and Larry Melican will be acting in his role. David Milliken is currently acting as Director Environment and Planning.

11 Close

Next meeting: March 2022 (TBC)
Wyong Committee Room / Microsoft Teams

Meeting closed at 3.37pm

Minutes

Coastal Open Space System (COSS) Advisory Committee

Minutes finalised and endorsed 20/12/2021 by
Luke Sulkowski

**Unit Manager Environmental Management
Coordinator/Chairperson**

Minor changes approved 12/1/2022 following member feedback provided.



Action log

Coastal Open Space System (COSS) Committee



Action Number	Meeting Date	Action	Responsible Party	Action Update	Status
27	25/7/2018	The Advisory Group requests that time be allocated in future meetings for external agency representatives to share updates from their relevant area.	Meeting Support Officer	Updates provided at 13 December 2021 meeting.	Ongoing
33	26/9/2018	The Advisory Group requests that as the Land Acquisition and prioritisation process matures, staff provide updates to the Committee at future meetings.	Natural and Environmental Assets	Discussed at 13 December 2021 meeting.	Ongoing
109	20/10/2020	The action plan from the Biodiversity Strategy to be included as a standing agenda item.	Meeting Support Officer	Discussed at 13 December 2021 meeting.	Ongoing
124	2/3/2021	The Advisory Group seek clarification from DPIE and LLS on opportunities for strengthening of policy and legislation to enable better regulation of tree and vegetation removal and clearing activities on Deferred Matters zoned land in order to avoid the unregulated significant impacts as has been experienced in locations on the Central Coast.	Environmental Management Staff / DPIE / LLS	No update. Letter sent to Premier on 17 June 2021. Acknowledgement letter received from Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier advising that the request would be forwarded to the appropriate Ministers. See action 144.	Pending
125	2/3/2021	The Advisory Group recommends to Council that the Administrator write to the NSW Premier requesting strengthening of legislation to allow prosecution of tree removal and land clearing on deferred matters lands.	Environmental Management Staff	Council resolved to write to Minister at 13 April 2021 meeting . Letter from Administrator sent 17/6/2021.	Complete

Action log

Coastal Open Space System (COSS) Committee



Action Number	Meeting Date	Action	Responsible Party	Action Update	Status
132	9/6/2021	The Committee request the Project Manager provide a briefing on the airport masterplan, plan of environmental management and subdivision plan at the next meeting.	Unit Manager Environmental Management	To be addressed at a future meeting.	Pending
136	21/9/2021	The Comparison undertaken by CEN of the COSS Report and Council's Biodiversity Strategy to be circulated to Committee members. Unit Manager Environmental Management to investigate the option of an Extraordinary Meeting to discuss the report.	Unit Manager Environmental Management	Discussed at 13 December 2021 meeting.	Complete
137	21/9/2021	A copy of Rochelle's Journal of Environmental Management Paper to be provided to Committee Members once available and added to the agenda for discussion at the next meeting.	Meeting Support Officer	Presentation given at 13 December 2021 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	Discussed at 13 December 2021 meeting.	Complete
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 currently liaising with Gary Chestnut on this matter.	Pending

Action log

Coastal Open Space System (COSS) Committee



Action Number	Meeting Date	Action	Responsible Party	Action Update	Status
				An email with additional information was sent from Gary, awaiting a response. 13/12: Staff to follow up with Peter Sheath.	
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	Item to be pushed back to early 2022. Economic and Property development to take the lead on this action. EMU to provide advice and input as required. See action 147	Pending
142	21/9/2021	Staff to provide an update to the Committee on the sale of 71 Debenham Road.	Unit Manager Environmental Management	Update provided at 13 December 2021 meeting.	Complete
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	This item was missing from the 21 September 2021 Minutes which were amended to include this action at the 13 December 2021 meeting.	Pending
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	Unit Manager Environmental Management		Pending

Action log

Coastal Open Space System (COSS) Committee



Action Number	Meeting Date	Action	Responsible Party	Action Update	Status
		regulatory control of deferred matters zoned land be given back to Council as opposed to DPIE and LLS.			
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	Recommendation will be included when the minutes are reported to Council.	Pending
146	13/12/2021	A map of the Glenning Valley reserves and Biodiversity Stewardship Agreement Council Report to be distributed to Committee members.	Senior Ecologist / Meeting Support Officer		Pending
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		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	Unit Manager Environmental Management		Pending

Action log

Coastal Open Space System (COSS) Committee



Action Number	Meeting Date	Action	Responsible Party	Action Update	Status
		private land, not just public land. Furthermore, representations should be made to local members requesting support of this.			
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		Pending