

Protection of the Environment Trust (PoET) Management Committee Meeting Record 26 May 2020



Location:	Skype Meeting	
Date:	26 May 2020	
Time	Started at: 2.02pm	Closed at: 3.10pm
Chair	Councillor Jane Smith	
File Ref	F2018/00732	

Present:

Councillor Jane Smith, Gary Murphy – Chief Executive Officer, Gary Chestnut, Joy Cooper, Barbara Wills

Staff present:

Luke Sulkowski – Unit Manager Natural and Environmental Assets, Shane Sullivan – Unit Manager Governance and Business Services, Larry Melican – Section Manager Natural Assets and Biodiversity, Kelly Drover – Advisory Group Support Officer

Item 1 Welcome, Apologies and Acknowledgement of Country

Apologies received: Nil

The Chairperson, Councillor Jane Smith, declared the meeting open and completed an Acknowledgement of Country and Connection to Land statement.

Item 2 Disclosure of Interest

The Chairperson called for any declarations of interest.

No disclosures were received.

Item 3 Confirmation of Previous Meeting Record and Action Log

The Committee confirmed the Meeting Record from 25 February 2020.

The Committee discussed the Action Log.

Item 4 Update advice from Chartered Accountant (Action 74)

Shane Sullivan (Unit Manager Governance and Business Services) discussed the advice received from Beda Chartered Accountants regarding funding arrangements for the Trust.

- Donations received which form the Public Fund are to be identified and kept in a separate account.
- Interest earned from the \$1.5million (COSS Funds) be kept in a separate account as it constitutes the Trust Fund.
- Once this has been done that an audit be undertaken and reported to Council as Trustee.

Whilst the Committee had no objections to separating out line items, it was noted that at the 25 February 2020 PoET meeting it was agreed that the Committee will continue to operate as is current practice with some further clarification around the mechanisms of donations to the public fund. Clarification needs to be sought to confirm that separating these line items would not change the current practice of the Committee.

The Committee requested that Finance staff do an internal review of the Trust financial accounts.

Action: Shane Sullivan to seek confirmation from Finance that separating the accounts will not change the current practice of the Committee.

Action: The Committee request Finance staff to complete an internal review of Trust financial accounts and provide advice on what factors might trigger a routine audit of the Trust.

Item 5 Update on stand-alone website for the Trusts (Actions 75 and 76)

Shane Sullivan (Unit Manager Governance and Business Services) provided an update on a stand-alone website for the Trust including the proposed design for the website.

<https://protectionoftheenvironmenttrust.org.au/>

Finance staff have been working with Westpac to progress the payment method which is the main hurdle at this stage.

Information is being collated regarding previous grants and projects to be included as content on the website.

It was agreed that there should be a link to the Trust website on Council's main webpage and that the COSS logo be included on the Trust website.

It is expected that the website will be up and running by the end of financial year.

Recommendation: The Committee recommend that Council as Trustee approve the spend of \$910 per annum for the operation of the website and that this be funded from the Public Fund.

Item 6 Recommendations on professionals for philanthropy advice (Action 7)

The Committee discussed the report on philanthropy advice for the Trust.

The Committee discussed the idea of contacting the agencies to ask for a quote, however agreed that it is currently not the right economic climate to be spending money on this when we have a website that will be up and running soon and will hopefully help to make it easier for people to make contributions.

Action: That philanthropy support for the Trust be included on the agenda for the first PoET meeting of 2021.

Item 7 Update on Annual Strom Talk (Action 79)

The Annual Strom Talk is not able to occur as planned at this stage due to COVID-19. The intention is to hold the event in September if possible.

The Committee discussed two alternate options if the original style of event can't go ahead as planned, including a Webinar or an outdoor style activity like a bushwalk that would allow for social distancing.

Action: The Annual Strom Talk to be include on the agenda for the next meeting.

Item 8 Grants Program (Standing Agenda Item)

Larry Melican (Section Manager Natural Assets and Biodiversity) advised that they are working through the SmartyGrants program and updating the guidelines for Protection of the Environment Trust grants. This should be completed by the end of the week, at which point there will be a media release. Updates will be provided at each meeting on any grant applications received.

There have been some difficulties contacting the University of Sydney who last year were approved funding from PoET for their yellow-bellied glider project. It is believed the person who made the application no longer works at Sydney Uni and there are difficulties finding the appropriate person to deal with invoicing. This could lead to the \$11,806 not being paid out for this grant.

Councillor Smith updated the Committee on the Book of COSS project. At the 11 May 2020 Ordinary Council Meeting, Council resolved to release the \$8,200 subject to conditions which the Committee agreed to at the last meeting. A letter will be sent to Mr. Bell providing details of those conditions and advising that all actions need to be completed with evidence provided before any money is released.

Item 9 Finance Report

The Committee discussed the PoET Interest report in response to Action 81. It was noted that the interest declines over the years and what the reasons could be for this.

Action: The Committee request that a Finance Staff member attend the next meeting to clarify the following:

- How interest is earned and allocated to the Trust.
- Why the April 2020 Finance report shows the Coastal Open Space (interest on \$1.5 million) as \$458,719.30 but the report provided showing interest since amalgamation and YTD up to April 2020 shows the figure as \$214,841.01.
- Where this money is invested as the finance report doesn't show which account it is in.

Item 11 General Business and Close

No General Business.

The meeting closed at 3.10pm

Next Meeting: Tuesday 18 August 2020
2pm – 3pm
Location TBC