

Meeting of the Cooks River Alliance Steering Committee

Host: Hurstville Council

Thursday 17 October 2013, 9:30am-12pm

Hurstville City Council: Level 2 Meeting Room

Meeting Minutes

Attendance

Sarah Kamarudin	Ashfield Council
Vila Gupta	Bankstown City Council
Nell Graham	Canterbury City Council
Alison Hanlon	Hurstville Council
Kathryn Godfrey	Hurstville Council
Jim Fraser	Marrickville Council
David Dekel	Rockdale City Council
Cathy Jones	Strathfield Council
Chris Hudson	Cooks River Alliance (Chair)
Shefali Chakrabarty	Cooks River Alliance
Jasmine Payget	Cooks River Alliance
Meg Wray	Cooks River Alliance (Minutes)

Apologies

Lisa Currie	City of Sydney
Jean Brennan	Marrickville Council

<p>1. Introductions: new Alliance staff Jasmine Payget and Meg Wray</p> <p>Chris introduced Jasmine (Community Engagement and Education) and Meg (Communications). Jasmine gave a brief description of her work and interests.</p>	
<p>2. Minutes of previous meeting, Apologies</p> <p>Apologies: Lisa and Jean</p> <p>Previous Minutes:</p> <p><u>Continued discussions</u> Discussion around CZMP and the second Alliance term will be continued later in this meeting.</p> <p><u>Funding formula</u> Alliance staff found the funding formula, thanks for member's help.</p> <p><i>Minutes were accepted.</i></p>	
<p>3. Establishment of a permanent Alliance</p> <p>David proposed the Alliance be established on an on-going basis, reducing the need to advocate for existence each term. The meeting discussed some of the reasons for and against this approach:</p> <p>For</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councils will want to re-evaluate their membership every couple of years no matter what; • The word 'term' makes the Alliance seem more like a project <p>Against</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before a permanent Alliance could be established, an evaluation would need to be done on what each member council feels has been the 'value for money' of the Alliance so far. Right now the Alliance is tied to project outcomes. • The scope of the Alliance is changing with the new grant, so this is not the time to set up a permanent Alliance. <p>The meeting agreed not to pursue the idea of a permanent Alliance at this time.</p> <p>David and Alison advised that neither Rockdale nor Hurstville are in a position confirm future Alliance funding.</p> <p><u>Letters to General Managers</u> Chris asked members if there was specific information they would like included in the letter</p>	<p>DECISION</p>

<p>to be sent from the Chair each council's General Manager, seeking favourable consideration of the next Alliance term, at the current year contribution plus an annual CPI increase (as per the Board resolution).</p> <p>David suggested that the letter should include a copy of the Annual Report. Cathy advised that the Annual Report is a presentation of Alliance activities, and does not need to be endorsed.</p> <p>Nell suggested that Chris take the Annual Report to the meeting with each General Manager, and that the relevant Steering Committee member should attend. The Steering Committee agreed, and directed that the Chair's letter to General Managers contain the advice that the Project Manager will be seeking a meeting with each General Manager.</p> <p>David asked that relevant Steering Committee members CC'd in the letter to General Managers.</p> <p><u>Fees for the next Alliance term</u></p> <p>The meeting discussed the possibility of reviewing the funding formula, or adjusting the starting dollar amount that the formula is applied to.</p> <p>Chris advised that the Alliance will likely have some funds leftover at the end of term, and could investigate utilising some of these funds to reduce the fees for the next period.</p> <p>David suggested that Alliance look at other models (such as the GRCCC's) since although the Alliance formula is fair, it is different from similar organisations.</p> <p>Cathy agreed it is worth reviewing funding.</p> <p>The meeting agreed Chris would prepare funding options and present them to the Executive for review.</p>	<p>Chris</p> <p>DECISION</p> <p>Chris</p> <p>Chris</p> <p>Chris</p>
<p>4. Strategic planning for the Alliance and the Cooks River catchment (paper attached)</p> <p><u>Incorporating the grant into the Action Plan</u></p> <p>The meeting agreed on the need to incorporate grant activities into the Action Plan. Everyone agreed that two workshops (one half-day to review the current Action Plan, and one half-day to incorporate the grant) will be set up in the first quarter of 2014. Chris will set dates.</p> <p>Chris recommended that the committee endorse "one large plan that takes in all players" for the Alliance. Members expressed both concerns and support for involving all actors (such as state government and large corporations). Chris recommended the approach as an aspirational goal and principal for the Alliance, and asked for agreement on the paper.</p> <p>Following further discussion, the meeting accepted the recommendations in the planning paper (attached below).</p> <p>It was suggested that the Alliance seeks advice from the Sydney Coastal Councils Group about how they engage with State Government.</p>	<p>Chris</p> <p>Chris/Shefali</p>

<p>5. Catchment stakeholders meetings – 5 December (Shared Path) and 3 April 2014 (Agenda?)</p> <p><u>5 December</u> With the Cooks River shared path the subject of the next NSW Government Catchment Stakeholders meeting, Chris asked members for agenda details. Members advised that path safety, regional access links to and from the path (including the Greenway) and recreation/health aspects should be included.</p> <p>The meeting discussed how a shared path agenda is timely and would complement the work of councils, organisations (such as the Greenway), and regional strategies related to links and connections.</p> <p>The meeting agreed to invite Burwood Council.</p> <p><u>3 April Meeting Agenda Options</u> David suggested climate change, and Nell suggested weed management. Climate change was decided on for the 3 April agenda, and weed management for the next agenda.</p>	Chris
<p>6. Sydney Water: what do Members want?</p> <p>David and Jim agreed that the Alliance’s priority should be pushing for more information and data sharing (such as about sewage testing and programs that relate to Cooks River).</p> <p>Jim advised members of a Sydney Water / council stormwater works agreement, which reimburses councils for doing road surfacing.</p>	
<p>7. Agenda of 20 November Board Meeting</p> <p>The meeting briefly discussed the upcoming election of the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Board, and subsequent nominations of the Executive. David advised that he will not be renominating for the Executive.</p> <p>Chris requested suggestions for the 20 November Board meeting agenda. Jim suggested a Sydney Water update report.</p>	Chris
<p>8. Cooks River Place.People.Connections (Caring for our Country grant project): member contributions to on-ground works, idea for Aboriginal Advisory Committee for the project</p> <p><u>Member contributions</u> Chris advised the meeting that he took a management decision, for the grant application working budget, of member councils making a 30% cash contribution to on-ground funding.</p> <p>Alison informed the meeting Hurstville’s had believed that the grant on-ground works would be fully funded, and any funding would require council approval. She also expressed strong disappointment in the process.</p> <p>Chris apologised for the disappointment felt, and made the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members have not been committed for any monies, or any on-ground works • For fairness and equity purposes, an anticipated cash contribution from all member councils for the grant project budget working was set at an equal 30% for each 	

<p>member</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The \$46,000 anticipated from Hurstville was used for grant application budget preparation purposes, the submitted application did not include any budget details, just overall totals • The grant application does not include any raingarden locations, which are transferable across members • A \$115,000 cash component from the grant project is available to Hurstville, should Hurstville wish to take it up to build a raingarden • Should Hurstville not want to proceed with the Butler St raingarden, the project can be transferred to another location • The significant community engagement and education involvement in the grant project is available to all members, even if they don't have on-ground works (such as Ashfield Council and City of Sydney) • There is a \$166,500 grant funded budget for capacity building for all members • All other member councils have budget available for their cash contribution, apart from Rockdale City Council, who will make budget bids over two years after which other options will be examined. • Within the \$3.6M dollar project, there will be options and flexibility for finding the \$46,000, should Hurstville and Rockdale not be able to over 4 years • The Alliance can hold monies from members across financial years • Special arrangements for members are possible, subject to agreement from a majority of members <p>The meeting discussed some additional concerns related to funding for the grant, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible inequities in the different member council's in-kind contributions; • Risk of council members dropping out of the grant or Alliance. Shefali advised that this was identified in the grant risk assessment • The availability of additional extra funds if projects go over budget. <p>Chris advised that one-on-one meetings with member councils regarding the grant funding have been set up, to examine project details with each member.</p> <p>Chris advised that if member councils would like to change the proposed budget structure for the grant, this early stage of the grant is good time to make changes.</p> <p><u>Aboriginal Advisory Panel</u> Chris suggested that the Alliance convene a specialist panel of Aboriginal people to advise on the Aboriginal aspects of the grant project. He suggested that an honorarium be offered for panel members from non-profit community organisations or in a private capacity. The meeting agreed the idea for a panel be progressed.</p>	<p>Chris</p>
<p>9. Action Plan Programs reports and discussions</p> <p>The meeting agreed to return to this topic at a later meeting, due to time constraints.</p>	
<p>10. Other business</p> <p><u>Cooks River in the news</u></p>	

A member mentioned that Gardening Australia had an article titled 'Planting in the Cooks River'.

Bat management

The meeting briefly discussed an excellent flying fox management workshop attended by David and Allison, and a bat plan in the works by Sutherland Council. This topic may be revisited at future meetings.

Meeting concluded.

Steering Committee Report

Meeting 17 October 2013

Strategic Planning for Cooks River and for the Alliance

Background

The Alliance Action Plan identifies the need for consideration of a Coastal Zone Management Plan (CZMP) for Cooks River, for the next Alliance term. The Project Manager has met with Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH), and reported upon the CZMP process to the Committee on 22 August 2013 (report included below). At that meeting the Steering Committee requested the Project Manager prepare a further report on strategic planning.

At the Catchment Stakeholders meeting of 22 August, Sydney Water advised they are working on a strategic plan for the Cooks River. Also, OEH reported that Sydney Coastal Councils Group (SCCG) is leading a joint State and Local approach for Sydney Harbour strategic planning.

There is a variety of member views on undertaking a CZMP for the Cooks River, with at least two members not in favour.

Recommendations for remainder of the Alliance term

The Alliance secretariat proposes the Steering Committee endorse the following, regarding strategic planning for the Cooks River and for the Alliance.

That the:

- existing Alliance Management Plan and Action Plan be revised and updated, including to incorporate the Place.People.Connections (PPC) grant project; and that the Plans run until 2017, when the PPC project concludes
- Action and Management Plan revisions be guided by a half-day workshop with Steering Committee, and subsequently by an Action Group – members to be determined
- Alliance lobby and advocate for a single, holistic and over-arching strategic plan for the Cooks River catchment, which includes participation from, and actions for, all relevant State Government agencies, as well as all councils in the catchment
- Alliance work with Sydney Water to determine if they could lead such a holistic planning process, subject to satisfactory levels of local government involvement and input
- Alliance work with SCCG and OEH to follow their progress on planning for Sydney Harbour, and to determine any suitable applications for the Cooks River
- Alliance secretariat continue to report developments to the Steering Committee

Conclusion

This approach has considered the diversity of member positions and is considered appropriate for the short term. Should combined State and Local Government strategic planning not commence by 2015, the Alliance can consider leading such a process, or focus solely on areas of local government control.