

Meeting minutes

Details

Meeting: 73
Location: via Zoom
Date/time: 11 August 2021, 8.30am
Chairperson: Sandy Hoy

People present

1. Sandy Hoy (SH)
2. Adele Heasman (AH)
3. Candy Bingham (CB)
4. Cathy Griffin (CG)
5. Chad Weston (CW)
6. Douglas Sewell (DS)
7. Jennifer Wilson (JW)
8. Max Player (MP)
9. Suzanne Stanton (SS)
10. Virginia Macleod (VM)

Apologies

None

This meeting

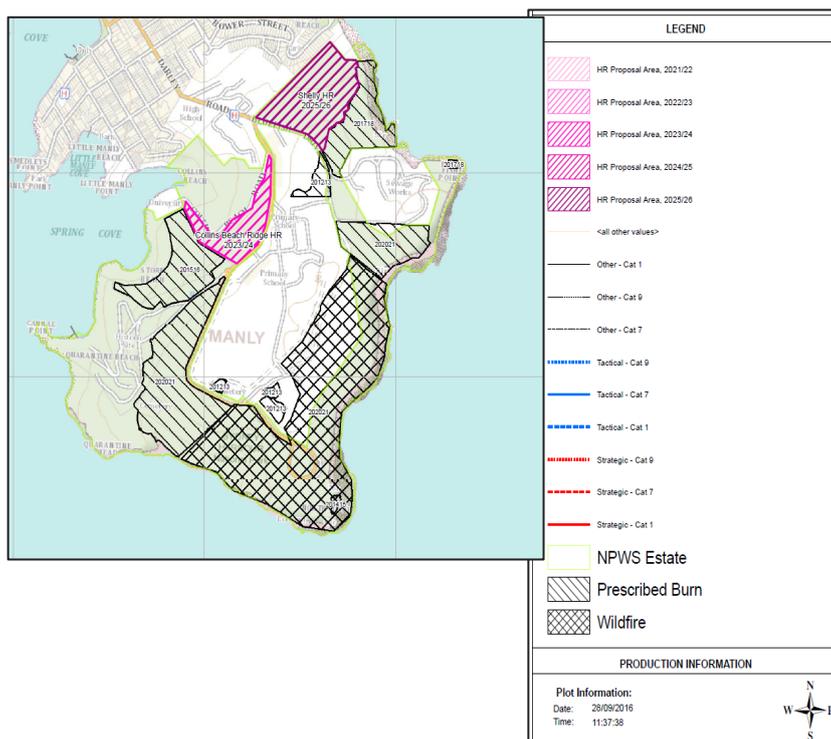
No.	Issue	Action	Responsible
1 Business and Governance			
1.1	Welcome	SH welcomed all attendees to the 73rd QSCCC meeting	SH
1.2	Acknowledgement of Country	I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet today and pay my respects to elders' past, present and emerging	CW
1.3	Attendance and Apologies	As above	SH
1.4	Confirmation of Agenda	Agenda was confirmed	SH
1.5	Declarations of Pecuniary or Other Interest	Nil	All
2 Additional Items			
2.1	Refer to NPWS and Mawland Reports		NPWS, MQS
3 Standing Items			
3.1	Confirmation of Previous Minutes	Previous minutes were adopted	SH

No.	Issue	Action	Responsible
		<p>Fence at the bus stop CW: The fence at the bus stop has been repaired. Safety works in Stage 1 are complete. Stage 2 works – how to move pedestrians around the site - are yet to be funded. They are on a 'shovel-ready' list with an appropriate risk profile. NPWS will seek continued funding.</p>	NPWS
		<p>Access to Old Mans Hat Track SS: a tour company has submitted an application for tours to Old Mans Hat. They would work with Mawland if they get approval.</p>	All to note
		<p>Environmental Liaison Officer Interviews scheduled for 31 August 2021. CW: Interviews are taking place on 31 August. Hope to appoint in September. SS to send conditions of approval about the ELO/Environmental Manager role, and any questions, to CW.</p>	NPWS SS
		<p>Two vacant QSCCC positions NPWS to advertise for Expressions of Interest for the two vacant positions on QSCCC after ELO role commences.</p>	NPWS
		<p>Bandicoot survey CW: The final report is not available yet. It will be distributed when final.</p>	NPWS
		<p>Funicular stairs Signs at the top and bottom of the stairs are ready. MP to arrange to install signage at top and bottom of stairs advising guests to hold onto handrail.</p>	MQS
		<p>Damage to penguin fence NPWS and MQS to liaise about clearing weeds behind the penguin fence.</p>	NPWS, MQS
		<p>Pampas grass CG identified Pampas grass in several locations at Q Station and the headland. CW: Pampas grass removal is a priority for bush regeneration volunteers and contractors. NPWS has spent \$40,000 on weed contracts post-fire, and will continue to prioritise post-fire weed removal. CW has asked contractors to investigate and treat a patch. Contractors to provide Pampas extent mapping and recommended control program.</p>	NPWS
		<p>Bus transport to North Head SH to send letter to Transport for NSW and Manly Ward Councillors about an electric shuttle bus between Manly and North Head.</p>	SH

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		<p>Ferry service</p> <p>SS: A Q Station staff member calls Manly Fast Ferry once a week and they say they don't know when the EcoHopper ferry to Q Station is starting again.</p> <p>CB to send MyFastFerry contact details to SH. SH to send letter to MyFastFerry to reinstate ferry service to wharf.</p>	CB, SH
3.3	Correspondence In/Out	Nil	All
3.4	Other Administrative Matters	Nil	SH
3.5	Proposed Events	Refer to Mawland Report	NPWS, MQS

4 Reports

4.1	NPWS Report	<p>Bushfire hazard reduction – works and planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NPWS has been participating in Northern Beaches BFMC subcommittee risk management plan development workshops Greater Sydney Branch has prepared their 5-year burn plan, subject to further risk planning. The map (Figure 1) below shows prescribed burns, wildfires and completed prescribed burns at North Head as of July 2021. <p>Figure 1. Sydney Harbour 5-year Burn Program July 2021</p>	All to note
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two hazard reduction burns are proposed at North Head in the next five years: Collins Beach Ridge HR (2023/24) and Shelly HR (2025/26) 	
		<p>Bus stop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NPWS engaged contractors to remediate Stage 1 safety issues present around the QS bus stop, roundabout, and adjacent roadways. The works include re-installing fence panels at the QS bus stop, creating asphalt surfaces to improve road-side walking tracks and drainage at the roundabout, and improving traffic signage. Additional asphalt works were conducted by a contractor to mitigate the roadside erosion of North Head Scenic Drive. Asphalt drainage lines have been installed, with small offshoots to manage water flow. 	NPWS
		<p>Long-nosed bandicoots</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In May, NPWS undertook a headland-wide survey to monitor the long-nosed bandicoot population. The cage trapping survey was conducted over 5 nights, and North Head stakeholders (including Q Station) provided access to their land. Staff and volunteers from AWC and Northern Beaches Council participated, providing a significant contribution for the duration of the survey. There were approximately 325 captures of long-nosed bandicoots in total, and new bandicoots were microchipped for monitoring. This number of captures compares favourably to surveys from previous years. Data analysis from this survey will provide an estimate of the long-nosed bandicoot's total population size at North Head, and help inform any additional management practices needed to assist with wildlife recovery. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under current conditions, the North Head Long-nosed Bandicoot population has a 64% chance of persisting after 50 years; Reducing the frequency and extent of 'catastrophes' such as predator incursions and wildfire that lead to high rates of adult mortality are important for improving long-term population persistence; While not directly tested in this report, all previous studies have shown that adult mortality is the primary factor affecting population persistence; High levels of environmental variation in the carrying capacity of the environment are detrimental to population persistence. Lowering environmental variation has a greater benefit to population persistence than increasing the carrying capacity with high levels of variation; Since 2016 the shift to a sex ratio that is higher in females than males has likely driven population growth; 	All to note

No.	Issue	Action	Responsible
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Maintaining a female-biased population and high proportions of females breeding within the population leads to increased chances of population persistence over 50 years. ● Recommendations for ongoing management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Management should place a high priority on limiting external factors that may increase adult mortality, for example predators such as foxes, dogs and cats, wildfire and traffic; ○ Environmental variation in the carrying capacity of the headland should be addressed by expanding areas of fertile foraging grounds close to adequate sheltering habitat and apply techniques to 'drought-proof' habitat eg watering areas prone to drying out, mulch foraging areas to enhance invertebrate abundance, revegetate areas prone to drying out; ○ Maintain and expand existing habitat across the headland by ensuring access to undisturbed foraging resources associated with shrubs and dense bushy areas for shelter; ○ Maintain annual monitoring to assess population size, sex ratio and collect data necessary for PVA, such as mortality rates. <p>The final long-nosed bandicoot report will be shared with the QSCCC.</p>	NPWS
		<p>Little Penguins</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NPWS is creating a Little Penguin Protection Plan - an internal procedural document to protect Manly's endangered little penguin population. The Plan outlines both standard and scalable responses to threats to the population, such as dog, cat, or fox activity on North Head. By collating all available information about threats to the population and creating a staff guide for appropriate responses in the Plan, we aim to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of NPWS's responses. ● A Little Penguin Recovery Team Meeting was held on 27 July, with members including staff from NPWS SNA staff, DPIE Biodiversity & Conservation, Sydney Coastal and Northern Beaches Councils, AIMP, and SEA LIFE Sydney Aquarium, as well as volunteer penguin wardens and the North Head penguin monitoring consultant. The meeting discussed recent developments with the penguin population, monitoring measures, and potential solutions to help the population. ● NPWS has received a draft report of the Little Penguin monitoring for the 2020/21 breeding season. Once finalised, the report will be made available for distribution. 	

No.	Issue	Action	Responsible
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Findings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This season's breeding was the lowest on record. Penguin breeding numbers are far from what they were prior to the fox incursion and mass penguin killing of 2015, and have not increased in recent years as had been hoped. Monitoring results are: number of breeding pairs (23), number of eggs laid (60), number of fledglings (51), and number of active nests (29). SS: where are the nests? CW: mostly around the southern beaches and headland. ○ There was no breeding activity detected in the vicinity of the Quarantine Station Boilerhouse, which had historically been one of the most significant and consistent breeding areas. Again there was no breeding detected within the AIPM property. The loss of breeding at both these sites has had a significant impact on the breeding output of the Manly Penguin population. SS: When the tree came down we realised the brush turkeys had blocked the drains behind the penguin fence. Water from the storms was directed down there. Behind the penguin fence now is a cleared wasteland, so weeds will gradually regenerate and the brush turkeys should be removed. CW: NPWS is happy to assist operationally. 	
		<p>Pest Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rabbit shoots continue to be undertaken on a three weekly basis for the next 6 months. NPWS will liaise with QS to schedule shoots during low occupancy periods. • Ongoing 6 weekly ongoing baiting program with 1080 capsules in canid pest ejectors and 1080 ground baits at North Head. 	NPWS
		<p>North Head Concept Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A summary of community feedback on North Head Scenic Area concept plans is available on the project website: https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/-/media/OEH/Corporate-Site/Documents/Parks-reserves-and-protected-areas/Parks-management-other/north-head-scenic-area-summary.pdf 	All to note
		<p>Annual reporting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment – Planning and Assessment – Compliance (Department) has been investigating compliance with the conditions of the Q Station approval (MP08_0041 determined 23 December 2003, as modified), particularly in relation to the annual reporting conditions. 	All to note
		<p>Compliance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smoke from the NPWS server in S7 required emergency work including a power pole being installed next to S7. This involved good co-operation between NPWS and Mawland. SS1 and SS discussed and are reviewing the issue. 	NPWS, MQS

No.	Issue	Action	Responsible
		<p>North Head Volunteer Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteer program currently suspended due to Covid restrictions Group usually meets weekly Targeting post fire weeds in accordance with Recovery Plan and Regional Pest Management Strategy <p>Volunteer registration available on recovery web page https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/parks-reserves-and-protected-areas/fire/park-recovery-and-rehabilitation/north-head-bushfire-recovery</p>	All to note
		<p>Additional agenda items</p> <p>Update on early exercise of the lease renewal (CG)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SS: waiting for response from NPWS about early exercise of the lease renewal. Mawland needs tenure for the banks. Several QSCCC members supported Mawland in early exercise of the lease renewal. <p>CW: The lease is being managed by Property and Commercial Branch. Lease negotiations are commercial in confidence.</p>	All to note
		<p>Bushcare (CG)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Garigal Landcare volunteer group has been targeting pampas grass on North Head and is supported by bush regeneration contractors engaged by NPWS. The Greater Sydney Regional Weed Management Plan lists Pampas Grass under the “asset protection” category, as a general biosecurity duty (GBD). This means it is the land manager’s responsibility to “To prevent the spread of weeds to key sites/assets of high economic, environmental and social value, or to reduce their impact on these sites if spread has already occurred. These weed species are widespread and unlikely to be eradicated or contained within the wider regional context. Effort is focussed on reducing weed threats to protect priority high value assets.” 	All to note
		<p>NPWS charges for parking at North Head</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CW: NPWS collects park use fees to enable NPWS to support the maintenance and improvement of visitor facilities. NPWS charges \$5 per day for parking at carparks along North Head Scenic Drive, between the North Fort Café and Fairfax walking track. NPWS is proposing changes to parking at North Head. SS: The Q Station carpark forms part of the Q Station lease and is Mawlands’ responsibility. Some visitors to North Head park in the Q Station carpark so they don’t have to pay the NPWS parking fee and then walk up the hill. 	All to note

No.	Issue	Action	Responsible
		<p>Mawland considered installing a boom gate with a similar parking fee to NPWS, and putting the money into a fund for preservation of Q Station as a way of stopping people only going to the National Park from using the Q Station carpark. Mawland is not pursuing the boom gate and parking fee due to cost of installing parking infrastructure.</p> <p>CW will come back to the QSCCC with more information about parking at North Head.</p>	CW
4.2	Mawland Report	<p>Activities during Site Closure</p> <p>SS: Q Station is closed until the end of September at least. People are cancelling bookings until December and are wanting their deposits back. Events are being pushed out as much as possible. Most staff are receiving disaster payments. Some senior staff are on site. Steve Carrodus, our General Manager, is on site for security. Maintenance people are on site doing work. \$200,000 has been spent on capital works and maintenance in the last two months.</p> <p>The Sculptures de Refusees event planned in July will be pushed out until it is possible to hold it. The October sculpture event may also have to be pushed out despite sculptors being ready.</p> <p>Q Station is closed with no guests or services, but a lot of people are still walking through the site. No vandalism or problems have occurred.</p> <p>People are asking why the coffee shop is not open. Several staff would be needed to organise the coffee shop and sandwiches, food and cakes. Low sales won't support staff.</p>	All to note
		<p>Tourism Award</p> <p>We have applied for a major international tourism award for a major tourist attraction. The more awards the better to attract customers when times are good.</p>	All to note
		<p>Land Tax</p> <p>SS: Mawland now has to pay \$250,000 in annual land tax to Office of State Revenue as we are now not exempt. Mawland was originally exempt from land tax because it was a Deemed Conservation Agreement relating to the cultural heritage and money put into the buildings. In the past few years the Office of State Revenue changed that legislation so the conservation agreement only related to money spent on biodiversity. That exemption is not available to NPWS because they don't pay land tax, so Mawland can't join the NPWS biodiversity exemption. We are working with NPWS to gain exemption for the remaining term of the lease because we should continue to keep that exemption. If land tax has to be paid less money can be spent on site maintenance.</p>	NPWS, MQS

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		<p>Site Wide Plans</p> <p>In 2022 the site wide plan review and audit will be undertaken. These plans will require a lot of time of the QSCCC. The plans can't be done until the ELO is in place.</p> <p>The moveable heritage plan has been reviewed. Elizabeth Broomhead and SS are sending the moveable heritage plan to Heritage for review before distributing it to the QSCCC.</p>	NPWS, MQS
		<p>Open days</p> <p>SS: Last year the Open Days were held over four weekends for the Sculptures and offered free tours. This year one Open Day was held earlier in the year, but doubt we will be having the second open day late this year. Last year DPIE advised that not holding the open days was considered as a non-compliance, but they wouldn't take action for the non-compliance. We are hoping that DPIE will do the same thing this year. Will write to DPIE to exempt us from non-compliance for not holding the open days this year.</p>	All to note SS
		<p>Annie Egan Plaque</p> <p>SS: A group 'Operation Pilgrim' has applied to Mawland and NPWS proposing to install a plaque commemorating the role and passion of Annie Egan inside the hospital site at Q Station in December. The group is planning an elaborate function at Q Station involving dinner, tea, lunches. The NPWS Memorial Policy was sent to the QSCCC. Mawland generally supports the plaque in the hospital, but note the QSCCC's request at the last meeting for the plaque to include other nurses.</p> <p>CW: The proposal involves 1. An event (Mawland) and 2. the plaque (NPWS). The group needs to write to NPWS about the proposal and send an application for the plaque. NPWS would consider it in various committees and with Heritage Council. The decision will then be at Director discretion. The question is whether the plaque should be for Annie Egan and Elizabeth McGregor, or just for Annie Egan. CW will help them with the procedures for the plaque.</p> <p>SS: Questions from the group about approval of the plaque will be referred to NPWS. Mawland are reaching a compromise with the group about the extent of Mawland's willingness to pay towards the function.</p>	NPWS, MQS
		<p>Support for Q Station in COVID times and beyond (CG)</p> <p>CG: Appreciate the work that Mawland are doing, and support for MP and SS in these challenging times</p> <p>CG: Thanks also to CW – it is challenging at North Head with a lot of walkers.</p>	All to note
4.3	Chairpersons Report	Nil	SH

Quarantine Station Community Consultative Committee (QSCCC)



Meeting minutes

No.	Issue	Action	Responsible
5	Presentations	Nil	SH
6	General Business		SH
6.1	Thanks from Australia Remembers Committee	AH: Thanks from the Australia Remembers Committee for the ready support from MP, SS and Steve Carrodus to assist with transport issues while the bus stopped only at the Q Station roundabout. The committee was happy to have a bus available at the last minute. Thanks also to CW for NPWS support for the bus to go to North Fort.	All to note
6.2	Note taking	SH has taken and written up the minutes for the last two meetings because the ELO has usually taken notes but the position has not yet been filled. Other notetaking options were discussed if the ELO is not available.	All to note
7 Meeting Close			
7.1	Confirm Action Items	Confirmed	SH
7.2	Close	10am	SH

Next meeting

Wednesday 10 November 2021, 8.30am