

Minutes and Outcomes from Berri Barmera Local Action Planning Committee  
Meeting held 13<sup>th</sup> October 2009 at the Berri LAP Office 7:15pm

Present: Lisa Stribley, Barry Porter, Jame Peltz, Paul Stribley, Ruth Patching,  
Max Kubenk, Lloyd Wright

Apologies: Brenton Fenwick, Tony Whateley, Bob Clark, Gill Beeson

Barmera Primary School students opened the meeting with a performance of the workshop they intend to present at Canberra River Health Conference and have already presented at the Adelaide River Health Conference.

1. Welcome/Apologies

2. Agenda Approval

Nothing to Add

3. Minutes for Confirmation

The minutes of the September meeting are accepted.

Moved: Barry

Seconded: Jayme

CARRIED

4. Business Arising/Action Sheet

Nothing to Add

5. Correspondence

Correspondence for September was reviewed and found acceptable. There was a brief discussion on the new water licensing instruments.

6. Financial Report

The financial report from September was accepted.

Moved: Lisa

Seconded: Barry

7. OH & S

Nothing was presented

8. Committee Members Reports

Barry Porter

Barry is currently on holidays

He also spent some time doing salinity mapping around Overland Corner and found that due to water levels the salt

levels are quite low. He has also been asked to do salinity mapping through the Pike.

Jayme Peltz

Jayme has been involved with critical water for permanent plantings and in producing crop reports and mapping for every landholder that applies.

He has also been continuing his work on the Pike from the NRM Board and is involved with running a pest plant program.

Lisa Stribley

Lisa is currently heavily involved in water licensing and the separation of land and water.

Lisa's unit has also been subject to a staff re-shuffle due to issues regarding federal and state tensions during negotiations.

Lloyd Wright

Nothing to report as he has been on holidays

Max Kubenk

Nothing to report except that it has been a good year for business.

**9. Riverland Futures Taskforce – Environmental Education**

In early October Ruth attended a Riverland Future Taskforce forum which was held with the intention of co-ordinating groups within the community so as to produce a greater standard of environmental education across the region. Representatives from the LAPS, NRM Board, DECS as well as other important businesses and groups were present. During the meeting it was agreed the although the Riverland is well placed to offer a high quality of environmental education there needs to be consolidation and coordination of current positive aspects in order for future expansion. One of the key ways in which to achieve this was to examine ways in which environmental education can be built in to basic curriculum numeracy and literacy objectives. It was hoped that a greater understanding of how we can achieve lasting and successful environmental education can be gained by focussing on the successes and impediments of six schools within the region.

The LAP's were also asked to provide thoughts and opinions regarding the work they currently do and any opportunities they see regarding environmental education. Any additional thoughts regarding the LAP's position in the delivery of environmental education and within the co-ordination of these groups were also encouraged.

The Committee showed interest in the idea and commented on the fact that if environmental education is not placed within the curriculum, schools and not likely to get funding for their activities.

**10. Walking Trails Project**

Ruth commented that the possibility is being explored of restricting the scope of the proposed long trail during the planning stages. Due to the difficulties of creating a

trail through the National Park it was proposed that in the planning stages it would be expedient to concentrate on developing the trails in the area preceding the National Park whilst proposing the possible extending of the trail through to Lock 4 at a later stage.

Ruth also proposed that we combine loop walks from Berri with loop walks from a specified car park. This would increase walking distance options allowing for walks to be accessible from Berri, reducing problems with possible poor road quality, but also having the option of access to the loops from a car park creating greater loop variety and length.

The possibility was also discussed of creating a walk focussing on the sand dunes as an area of interest. It was noted that due to the scarcity of vegetation surrounding the sand dunes it would be necessary to create a parking spot from which people could access the trail. The committee generally felt that as the dunes are an Indigenous sensitive site it may be better to concentrate the walks on other areas.

Ruth also highlighted a recent baseline indigenous heritage assessment of the area commissioned by the DEH for the Katfish reach program. A predictive map was obtained of areas in which there was a high likelihood of indigenous cultural sites being found. A preliminary assessment suggests that our proposed trails would run through many of these areas. The committee felt that highlighting indigenous sites along the trail was an option that needed to be explored.

Ruth also raised safety issues regarding the area given the rubbish and permanent campers in the area. Ruth is planning to contact the police to try and ascertain their opinions of the area.

## **11. Committee Governance**

A few weeks ago Paul attended a beneficial Certificate IV in Business (Governance) course. The course covered 4 main themes of:

- Governance
  - Roles and responsibilities of board members
  - Constitutions
  - Managing meetings
  
- Planning
  - Annual Budgeting
  - Monitoring financial management and budgets
  - Strategic and Business Planning
  - Using a Business Plan
  
- Communicating
  - How board members should contribute to the workplace
  - Communicating with the community
  - Building partnerships
  
- Sustaining

- Managing Assets
- Risk Management
- Reporting and Acquittal of funding
- Developing and Implementing organisational policies

Paul commented that he had learnt and developed new skills, particularly in relation to strategic and business planning, developing partnerships, and risk management, and that he believes there are ways in which we can improve the effectiveness of the way the BBLAP committee operates including making more efficient use of committee members time, determining exactly what the role of the committee is and reducing the exposure of risk to committee members.

Although Paul acknowledged that many of these changes will take time to occur, and that there is a need to update our constitution, he commented that he would like to start implementing some new things;

- Meetings should be strategic, focus on decision making and are not for general information dissemination.
  - Change our committee meeting frequency to once every 2 months (we had 6 meetings in 2008/09 in any case) with a project report (ultimately shown as progress against milestones in the business plan!) and any other important information circulated monthly.
  - Committee needs to focus on strategic / business planning (what NRM outcomes do we want to achieve), updating constitution and policies. This might be dull and boring for the next 6 months but should set BBLAP up for the future – esp as we need to start looking outside of the box for future funding avenues.

Paul felt that although the Committee has done strategic planning previously, we have lost focus on it very quickly (driven by time constraints and outputs which need to be delivered based on funding received at the time).

- Our current financial practices expose the committee to significant risk including fraud, misappropriation of funds etc.
  - Appointment of a Treasurer who will meet with the Project Manager on a monthly basis and who at the very least will sign bank and reconciliation statement. Ideally the Treasurer would chair a finance sub-committee who could then meet monthly but this might be too big a step. Other option is the appointed Treasurer could join the Exec committee and the Exec meet monthly.
- Who are we?
  - Paul stated that although the committee has discussed this before we need to talk not only in terms of engaging the community in current/ future projects, but also in developing partnerships with other

organisations so that we can reduce our reliance on funding from traditional government NRM sources and be viable long term.

Paul recommended that over the next 6-12 months we should work on developing and implementing these changes and strategies (instead of being side-tracked back into “normal” project management).

Paul also requested the Committee consider Ruth taking on an expanded role in delivering projects or, alternatively, in putting someone else on for a set contract. Paul commented that if he can achieve the new goals whilst working part time there is at least some funding available to cover additional costs of other employees.

The Committee decided that by the next meeting in December they would trial some of the new ideas. They agreed that the new structure had the potential to give the committee greater control and in identifying greater opportunities for our work. It was also decided that, for the time being, hiring a new person was not necessary. In order to focus attention the committee agreed that presenting information on a screen rather than in hand-outs was the best way to present information. By December the Committee would like to see;

- Financial reports on the big screen
- A run down on the status of on-going projects
- The appointment of a treasurer

Jayne agreed to take on the role of treasurer for the period until December.

## **12. Request to add Ruth as a signatory**

This motion was discussed and agreed to in-principle at the last meeting, but needed a formal motion with a quorum. The Committee decided that they would prefer not to add Ruth as a signatory to ensure greater security in financial matters.

## **13. Wetland Bus Tour**

The bus tour of the wetlands was organised for Sunday the 11<sup>th</sup> of October. Due to the forecast of bad weather, and with floodplains already wet, it was decided to be postponed for another weekend. There are currently approximately 21 people interested in attending the tour and Paul is waiting to advise them of a revised date for the tour.

## **14. Funding**

Paul stated that we have received an agreement from the NRM Board for \$202,000 for a 2 year period from 1<sup>st</sup> July this year to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2011. He commented that we are still waiting for schedules to be written up so we know exactly what milestones need to be delivered, though we expect it will be along the same capacity building / wetland monitoring lines as previously.

Paul also advised the committee that he submitted 3 projects to the State NRM Grants program that closed last Friday.

1. Capacity Building project to cover costs of Newsletter in Riverland Weekly and re-design of website.
2. Erosion control in 3 ephemeral creeks at Overland Corner
3. Fire management plan at Mussel Lagoons

Paul also commented that if there are any other project ideas the Commonwealth CfoC **community action grant** program (up to \$20k) (new version of envirofund) closes next week.

## **15. Annual General Meeting**

Paul advised that our AGM is scheduled for Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> November at the LAP Office. It is planned to kick off with a BBQ from 6:00 and have the meeting commence at 7:30. It will be advertised in the Riverland Weekly for a couple weeks prior to the meeting.

## **16. Lake Bonney Update**

Paul showed a brief photo presentation and commented that water is flowing back into the Lake. The fish traps are not yet operating as carp are not able to negotiate the rock wall until water levels in the lake rise up further. Tenders are currently being assessed to see who will develop the report on future management options for the lake.

## **17. Native Plant Nursery Proposal**

Paul commented that he received a phone call from Michelle Campbell in Karlene Maywald's electoral office last Friday, relating to issues surrounding vacant irrigation blocks and revegetating them. They have been hearing of people interested in planting native trees and shrubs, especially as windbreaks, but people are concerned about 100 year agreements through the River Murray Forest Project.

Concurrently, Bank SA (initially through Michelle and Paul have subsequently spoken to the Berri branch manager, Sarah Crisp) have expressed interest in supporting a local environment project, with one idea being to have trees and shrubs in bank branches that people can come and collect free of charge – Paul commented that this clearly will need some guidelines attached as to quantity and how its managed.

Sarah is trying to organise a meeting herself, Michelle and Paul in a couple weeks time, once she knows from her Managers what she can contribute and what outcomes they (Bank SA) would support. Paul commented that here is potentially a good opportunity for an ongoing project here.

Paul proposed that the LAP establish a community based native plant nursery that can be used to propagate plants for revegetation projects in the BBLAP area. Paul's idea is that this will work in conjunction with the nursery at Glossop High (which is not

achieving as good a success rate as hoped in terms of plant survival). Paul noted that we have been offered the back yard of Karlene's office on Kay Avenue as a location to place a nursery – which has benefits of rainwater availability, good access and staff on site who are willing to contribute to the running of the nursery. Paul did also note, however, that the only potential drawback was if Karlene is not re-elected, though any infrastructure (shade house / hot house) would be designed so it can be moved if necessary.

Paul has spoken to Council about any possible alternative sites on their land, and their advice at this stage is to use the electoral office if it has been made available to us. Although a nursery probably does meet zoning requirements in that area, provided we manage any run-off effectively they will allow it.

Paul think's this presents an opportunity for BBLAP to be proactive about revegetation and managing issues around vacant blocks, whilst also providing an opportunity to get the community to assist with seed collecting, propagation etc. Paul commented that Berri cottage homes is within close proximity so could get some volunteers from there. Whilst some work needs to be done surrounding outputs and prioritising works on ground, Paul believes this project could achieve some good outcomes.

Paul has not yet obtained quotes for what it would cost to establish the nursery, wanted to recommend that the BBLAP Committee support the establishment of a nursery, and contribute up to \$10,000 to establish it. If costs are higher than this after obtaining quotes then it can come back to the committee for further discussion.

Due to concern over the possibility of Karlene Maywald not being re-elected the Committee discussed other options for the nursery and explored the option of a temporary nursery until after the election.

Until any further decisions were made the Committee decided that they would like;

- More details on what will happen (including information from Karlene's office) if Karlene is not elected
- More details regarding accurate quoting for the nursery costs

## **18. Any Other Business**

Paul also noted that the Loxton the Bookpurnong LAP asked if we would like to buy back the Ford Sedan we previously owned, since the LBLAP no longer needs it.

The Committee decided that we currently have no need for another car and if the need arises for one in the future we will make a decision regarding it at a later date.

Meeting close: 9.45