

**ADELAIDE HILLS COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 2014
AGENDA BUSINESS ITEM**

Item: 18.2

Originating Officer: Renae Eden, Natural Resources Officer

Responsible Director: Deb Richardson, Director Engineering and Assets

Subject: Appointment of Biodiversity Advisory Group Members

1. Appointment of Members to the Biodiversity Advisory Group (BioAG) – Exclusion of the Public

Pursuant to Section 90(2) of the *Local Government Act 1999* the Council orders that all members of the public, with the exception of appropriate Council staff:

- CEO, Andrew Aitken
- Director Strategy & Development, Marc Salver
- Director Corporate Services, Tim Piper
- Director Engineering & Assets, Deb Richardson
- Director Community & Customer Service, David Waters
- Manager Governance & Risk, Lachlan Miller
- Minute Secretary, Leanne Llewellyn

be excluded from attendance at the meeting for Agenda Item 18.2 (Appointment of Members to Biodiversity Advisory Group).

The Council is satisfied that, pursuant to section 90(3)(a) of the Act, the information to be received, discussed or considered in relation to the Agenda Item is information the disclosure of which would involve the unreasonable disclosure of information concerning the personal affairs of any person (living or dead), because it would disclose the personal details of candidates who have expressed an interest to be on the Biodiversity Advisory Group.

The Council is satisfied that the principle that the meeting be conducted in a place open to the public has been outweighed in the circumstances because consideration of the item in a public forum would unreasonably disclose the personal details of candidates who have expressed an interest to be on the Biodiversity Advisory Group.

2. Appointment of Independent Members to the Adelaide Hills Biodiversity Advisory Group (BioAG) – Confidential Item

SUMMARY

In June 2014 Council resolved to commence a recruitment process to establish a Biodiversity Advisory Group (BioAG) consisting of up to three (3) independent members as community representatives and three (3) members from partnering organisations. Councillors Vonow, Loveday, and Nelson as well as the Director of Engineering and Assets and a Natural Resources Officer have already been determined to represent Council on the Group.

Expressions of interest for membership have been advertised and assessed by the selection panel appointed by Council.

This report seeks Council endorsement of the unanimous recommendation of the Panel. The term of appointment is to be two years from the date of the resolution.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolves:

- 1. The report be received and noted**
- 2. To appoint Anna Kakoschke, John Kallin and David Mussared as Community Representatives on the Biodiversity Advisory Group for a period of two (2) years.**
- 3. To appoint Peter Watton of Trees for Life, Anthony Abley of Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, and Andrew Murphy of the Sturt Upper Region Landcare Group as Representatives of Partnering Organisations on the Biodiversity Advisory Group.**

3. GOVERNANCE

➤ **Strategic Management Plan/Council Policy**

The formation of a Biodiversity Advisory Group that covers the entire Council area reflects the goals in the strategic plan in a number of areas, specifically:

Goal 2 – Sustainable Natural and Built Environs

Key Issue – 2.1.2 Implement the Biodiversity Strategy

Key Issue – 2.1.4 Manage, protect and restore native vegetation

Key Issue – 2.1.8 Undertake program to achieve dual outcomes of fuel reduction and biodiversity enhancement

The appointment of this position meets the requirements under the Terms of Reference for BioAG.

➤ **Legal Implications**

Advisory Groups do not have any status under the *Local Government Act 1999* (i.e. they are not s41 Committees).

Independent members of Advisory Groups are volunteers of Council and are insured via the Volunteer Insurance Policy as part of Council's membership of the Mutual Liability Scheme.

Independent members are not indemnified by the Council against liability arising as a result of their actions or omissions related to their involvement with the Advisory Group or undertaken in connection with their role as a member of an Advisory Group.

➤ **Risk Management Implications**

Appointments to the BioAG are low risk. The skills, ability and community connection of the recommended members will support Council in managing its natural resources through providing district wide strategies and engagement with community groups and organisations.

Individuals who were not selected may disagree with the outcome. Appropriate feedback will be provided.

➤ **Financial and Resource Implications**

The BioAG will not create significant demand on staff time and will incur only minor costs within the scope of the operational budget.

➤ **Customer Service and Community/Cultural Implications**

The recommended members bring extensive and diverse experience and significant networks with the community and partnering organisations. These attributes will enhance the services and projects undertaken by Council and support and advise staff on the implementation of the Biodiversity Strategy and other related initiatives.

➤ **Environmental Implications**

The BioAG will contribute to management of Council's natural assets, through a coordinated, targeted approach working with the community and other groups who maintain such assets throughout the district.

➤ **Community Engagement/Consultation**

The Expression of Interest (EOI) was promoted via two (2) local newspapers, Council's website, and via email.

Once appointed the group will be expected to provide information to and from other community groups and interested parties (supported by staff).

The BioAG will encourage a partnership approach on projects and seek to involve and engage the community wherever possible.

4. **BACKGROUND**

In June 2014 Council resolved:

1. *The report be received and noted;*
2. *That the Stirling Linear Park Advisory Group be dissolved on 30 June 2014;*
3. *That Stirling Linear Park Advisory Group members are sent a letter of thanks for their service;*
4. *To approve the establishment of the Biodiversity Advisory Group under the Proposed Terms of Reference in Appendix 1*
5. *To amend the Sustainability Advisory Group Terms of Reference to remove the roles and references related to biodiversity*

5. **ANALYSIS**

The Selection Panel for the BioAG comprised of Councillors Ian Bailey and Simon Jones, Director Engineering and Assets, Deb Richardson and Natural Resource Officer, Renae Eden.

Ten (10) expressions of interest were received, including two late or incomplete submissions. The applications that were late or incomplete were not assessed by the Panel.

A selection process was conducted with the Selection Panel unanimously deciding to recommend Anna Kakoschke; John Kallin; David Mussared; Anthony Abley; Peter Watton; and Andrew Murphy.

Summary of Recommended Applicants

Peter Watton is currently Operations Manager for Trees For Life (TFL) and represents TFL on a number of committees/groups across the district. He has provided support to TFL volunteers across 75 sites. He is currently treasurer of the Weed Management Society of SA. Council staff has successfully worked with Peter on a number of projects and committees. He has demonstrated a sound knowledgeable and understanding of issues across district and an ability to work in partnership with others. Council currently has a Partnership Agreement with TFL.

Anthony Abley is currently the district ecologist for Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources (DEWNR), and works with a number of private landholders as well as on public land. He facilitates the Heritage Agreement Grant scheme and has worked with a number of conservation organisations/projects across the district (including development of the Cromer Cluster). Council staff have worked with Anthony on a number of projects and committees and currently have a Draft Partnership Agreement with Natural Resources, Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges (previously the Natural Resources Management Board), who are now a 'branch' of DEWNR.

Andrew Murphy is currently a member of the Sturt Upper Reaches Landcare Group (SURLG) & member of the Olibel (biodiversity) Cluster Group Steering Committee. Andrew is a senior firefighter and training officer with the Ironbank Country Fire Service. Staff have successfully worked with SURLG on a couple of projects and committees and found members to be highly motivated, active, and knowledgeable. Council has funded the self-initiated SURLG 'Olibel cluster' biodiversity project. This group also works on private properties (funded by grants and membership fees) to connect habitats and increase habitat value.

David Mussared has been a member of the Aldgate Valley Landcare Group (AVLG) for over 18 years and also operates the Natural Resource Management jobs website. Staff have worked with David Mussared on a number of projects and committees. He is a very active and knowledgeable in the conservation community, established the Aldgate Valley Nature Walk & interpretive signage and has successfully applied for a number of grants which have been reinvested into conservation works in the district.

Anna Kakoschke is a Science and Sustainability teacher with strong background in community education, therefore a particularly strong connection to the youth community. She has a strong presence in community networks and has been very active in numerous biodiversity/Natural Resource Management projects, activities and groups across the district. She holds Bachelor of Environmental Management and is a land manager in Lobethal. Staff have worked with her previously and found her to be very professional.

John Kallin is currently retired. He is an active member of the Stirling SA Country Fire Service (CFS), Mt Lofty CFS Group and Adelaide Hills Council Bushfire Advisory Group. He has experience advising private residents on bushfire prevention through the CFS. He was Chair of the Stirling Linear Park Advisory Group 2010- 2014. John has demonstrated considerable knowledgeable in his field of expertise and has worked well in conjunction with others.

6. OPTIONS

Council has two options for BioAG:

1. The Council can support the unanimous recommendations of the Selection Panel
2. The Council can make alternative appointments to the BioAG.

**7. Appointment of Community Members to the Biodiversity Advisory Group –
Period of Confidentiality**

That having considered Agenda Item 18.2 (Appointment of Community Members to the Biodiversity Advisory Group) in confidence under section 90(2) and 90 (3)(a) of the *Local Government Act 1999*, the Council, pursuant to section 91(7)(b) of that Act, orders that the documents and reports pertaining to this matter be retained in confidence until the appointment have been confirmed with the applicants, but not longer than 6 months.



BIODIVERSITY ADVISORY GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE June 2014

These Terms of Reference are to be read in conjunction with Council's Procedures for Advisory Groups.

BACKGROUND

In November 2013, Adelaide Hills Council adopted a Biodiversity Strategy (the Strategy) to guide how Council manages land under its care and control in order to achieve regional biodiversity outcomes.

The Strategy outlines a number of short, medium, and long term objectives, strategies and actions. It was recognised that the development of an advisory group whose focus was to provide advice and direction to Council for the district as a whole, would be the most efficient and effective way to achieve a number of these objectives, strategies and actions.

These Terms of Reference set out the operating framework, roles and responsibilities of the Biodiversity Advisory Group ('the Group') and its members.

Role

The role of the Advisory Group shall be to provide specialist advice to Council staff in the implementation of Council's Biodiversity Strategy and provide feedback and information from and to other interested community groups and community members.

The Advisory Group shall provide Council staff with access to external expertise, networks and links to other organisations, community groups and the wider community with regard to biodiversity issues.

STRATEGIC LINKS

Current Strategic Plan

<i>Sustainable Natural and Built Environments</i>	2.1.2	Implement the Biodiversity Strategy and undertake high priority action
	2.1.4	Manage, protect, and restore native vegetation on Council land in partnership with our partners, volunteers, and community
	2.1.8	Undertake a program to achieve dual outcomes of fuel reduction and biodiversity enhancement

FUNCTIONS

The advice the Biodiversity Advisory Group would provide to Council is based on achieving (but not limited to) the following objectives and actions outlined in the Biodiversity Strategy:

- Identify policy options to better address issues between native vegetation and surrounding incompatible activities.
- Plan for connectivity linkages between habitats to increase range and enable adaptability of native flora and fauna
- Undertake a proactive, strategic and practical program to balance bushfire management with biodiversity outcomes
- Maintain road safety while supporting biodiversity value (within the Blue Marker Sites)
- Keep a register of council areas where known populations of threatened or declining indigenous species are extant and prioritise management
- Generate community interest and facilitate new community involvement in conservation activities
- Build community capacity to deliver biodiversity outcomes
- Facilitate and engage in liaison between experienced land management groups to learn from each other
- Improve, expand on and develop new partnerships that assist in biodiversity planning, management and funding opportunities within the region

MEMBERSHIP

The Biodiversity Advisory Group shall comprise of up to nine (9) members;

- Three (3) of whom shall be Elected Members appointed by Council.
- Three (3) from partnering conservation organisations, assessed against selection criteria below
- Three (3) members shall be community representatives, assessed against selection criteria listed below

The Manager Engineering and Assets (or delegate) or other officer appointed by the Chief Executive Officer shall act as Executive Officer for the Biodiversity Advisory Group.

SELECTION CRITERIA & APPOINTMENT

A partnering conservation organisation is an organisation that has a focus on biodiversity and meets one or more of the following criteria,

- provide programs within the district.
- have entered into a formal Agreement with Council
- are closely linked to Council in delivery of biodiversity projects
- provide or gain financial support to or from Council for biodiversity projects within the district

Organisations that meet the criteria to be a partnering conservation organisation shall then be eligible to be selected on the basis of the criteria outlined below.

Community representatives and partnering conservation organisations shall be selected on the basis of their skills, knowledge and experience in one or more of the following:

- natural resource management;
- native flora and fauna conservation;
- active participation in regional biodiversity projects;
- community education and development;
- managing fire risk in high conservation/biodiversity areas
- Grant processes (Government or otherwise);
- Links to relevant networks, community groups, and wider community;
- any other areas of relevance.

Appointments shall be to persons and not representatives of particular interest groups (with the exception of the 3 members from partnering conservation organisations), organisations or partisan interests. Appointees shall be appointed to represent all stakeholders. This does not preclude members of particular interest groups or those aligned with particular stakeholder interests from being appointed to the Group.

It shall be a pre-requisite that community representatives live, work or have an active interest in the Adelaide Hills Council area.