

Minutes for the Leards Forest Environmental Trust Inc. Meeting

Meeting Held: Thursday 13 May 2021 from 12:15pm

Venue: Boggabri Golf Club

Present: Cr Robert Kneale (RK) – Narrabri Shire Council, Danielle Nieuwenhuis (DN) – BCOP, Darren Swain (DS) – Whitehaven Coal, Hamish Russell (HR) – BCOP, Mitchum Neave (MN) Aboriginal Community Representative, Cr Lloyd Finlay (LF) – Narrabri Shire Council, Ros Druce (RD) – Boggabri CCC and MCCM Alternate, Sebastian Moreno (SM) – Tarrawonga Coal, Stewart Dunlop (SD) - BCOP

Independent Chair: David Ross (DR) **Independent Secretary:** Debbie Corlet (DC)

Apologies: Colleen Fuller (CF)

1. Welcome & apologies

DR welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially to the new members Mitchum, Stewart and Danielle. DR explained that usually we spend most of the time focused on discussing the applications. This time we have no new applications.

2. Business Arising and Previous Minutes

The minutes were endorsed by members as an appropriate summary of what was discussed at our November 2020 meeting. Actions on DR were completed.

3. Review and consideration of applications

No applications were received.

4. General Business

A lengthy discussion was held, building on what took place at the Trust's last meeting with respect to our direction.

RD – We need to set out the actual criteria before going through the Assessment Form.

DR – We historically had 4 criteria items that needed to be met.

1. It was within the 25 km radius from the forest itself.
2. The project works will contribute to the wider community.
3. Needs to be done by a community group.
4. The works should take place within 12 months but would be open for projects to go beyond the 12 months with Trust approval as to why.

RD observed that the Trust's work is not reflecting what it was originally set out to do, causing confusion amongst the community. HR responded in agreement that the Trust was originally set up for the natural environment to mitigate what was done to the forest.

DR sought clarification from RD whether she was suggesting that the core focus of the Trust should be natural environmental projects like revegetation, improving habitats? RD indicated that yes, that was the case. Works are still to occur within the 25 kms of the forest. It was to mitigate the forest. Doesn't need to be in the forest itself but in and around the forest. Try and mitigate the loss of habitat.

MN – So, what have you done before?

DR – The Trust has provided funding with respect to solar panels, water tanks, irrigation systems etc.

HR observed that all three mines are doing extensive improvements to biodiversity outcomes already to mitigate any loss. Boggabri Coal, alone, are already planting 86,000 trees. The Trust won't get much interest if the mines are already doing similar work.

SD questioned that, if you exclude solar, tanks – what sort of projects do you think should come forward?
RD – Revegetation, learning about the slow burns for the agriculture communities around the forest. So, we can look after the little forest we have left.

LF – I think it's going in the right track now as it was going out of proportion before. How many trees can you plant? They are already planting trees on agricultural land. There are only so many trees you can plant. I'm happy that we are bringing it back into line. We've got to justify to the community.

DS – I'm a fence sitter on this as we've been down the natural environment only path and got no applications. That's why it was expanded to the built environment and why we got to this point. The way it is now, people can still apply for Natural Environmental projects, they are more than welcome to apply however when it was expanded that's when we started to get applications.

SM – The 3 mines are doing extensive work in that space – so why duplicate.

SD indicated that he is comfortable with the Trust focusing on natural environment projects in principle, but also has no problems with considering other projects as well. In response DN observed that it is a narrow scope. Important to have assessment criteria. If from a natural product but could be other projects that could benefit them as well. What is the environmental benefit which would give more leeway? Intrigued as to why they aren't interested.

DR – DS suggested as a compromise to spread the news to all the community with preference to wanting to fund natural projects but still open to discussing other projects like solar panels, water tanks type projects.
RD – As long as we stick to projects that still enhance or fill the gap around Leards Forest where the habitats has been taken away. There are other things you can do. Workshops and training could be done and invite others in. Newer technologies like tree troffs are working etc. There's a reasonable scope but need to get it out there for people to understand where it all fits. Anybody can apply but need to have that initial criteria and boundaries set with what it was originally for and what it is doing now.

Trust members were in agreement with a motion for the Trust to have a preference to fund natural environmental projects (revegetation, weed control, habitat improvements) but still be open to funding other relevant environment projects like those funded previously (eg solar panels, water tanks, water efficient irrigation systems).

DS questioned whether the Trust needs more advertising with a flyer / website, so people understand what it is about.

MN – We can put examples in the flyer to give people ideas.

DR – Yes, just broad ideas. So, everyone is comfortable with the Trust going forward that they prefer natural environmental projects to be submitted to us but still open to other projects.

DN – Yes, projects with a positive environment impact with maybe a certain amount of money for natural environment but could be a percentage only for something that may not be "natural".

ACTION: Trust members were in agreement that:

- DR to draft content for a one page awareness flyer, with simple examples and without graphic designer-input, and submit to Trust for feedback
- DR to contact Caz Nancarrow about advertising in the Green Flyer
- DR to notify the Trust re cost for advertising in the Green Flyer and seek approval from the Trust
- DR to also speak to Caz Nancarrow re feasibility of a letterbox drop within 25 km radius (of the forest) and the cost involved
- DR to notify the Trust re cost of a letterbox drop and seek approval from the Trust
- SM, DS and HR then to ensure that one page flyer to be uploaded onto each of the mine's websites.
- DR to edit guidelines for Trust review
- DR to locate and discuss revised draft guidelines with graphic designer and obtain quote

- DR to gain approval from Trust for quote

David thanked everyone for their involvement.

Date for next Meeting

Next meeting is Thursday 28 October 2021.

Meeting closed at 1:31 pm.

Action List

Action Owner	Action to be completed
DR	Draft content for a one page awareness flyer, with simple examples and without graphic designer-input, and submit to Trust for feedback
DR	Contact Caz Nancarrow about advertising in the Green Flyer
DR	Notify the Trust re cost for advertising in the Green Flyer and seek approval from the Trust
DR	Also speak to Caz Nancarrow re feasibility of a letterbox drop within 25 km radius (of the forest) and the cost involved
DR	Notify the Trust re cost of a letterbox drop and seek approval from the Trust
SM, DS and HR	Ensure that one page flyer, once completed, is to be uploaded onto each of the mine's websites
DR	Edit guidelines for Trust review
DR	Locate and discuss revised draft guidelines with graphic designer and obtain quote
DR	Gain approval from Trust for quote