

# Minutes of the Community Working Group Meeting

Lord Howe Island Museum Library 26/10/2016

4.30pm – 5.30 pm

**Attendees:** Penny Holloway (CEO LHI Board); Anthony Wilson (LHI Board); Andrew Walsh (LHI Board); Esven Fenton; Jack Shick; Frank Reed; Therese Turner; Beth Wilson, Barbara Ardill; Ian Hutton.

**Apologies:** Helen Tiffin; Peter and Robyn Curtin; Bronwyn Tofaeono; Mark McKillop; Karen Wilson

## 1. Introductions and apologies

Penny welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for any apologies

## 2. Notes from last meeting: Action items and matters arising

*Minutes from last meeting and corrections*

Therese asked for clarification regarding the mechanism for people to comment on the Public Environment Report (PER). Andrew said he will address the issue in the updates.

*Matters arising /Actions last meeting*

Penny discussed the actions from the last meeting. Guidelines for the PER had been distributed to the group and Penny gave an overview of the process and guidelines. Also discussed by Penny were the Director General Guidelines to follow for the Species impact Statement (SIS). Andrew said the guidelines were the NSW threatened species guidelines, not the Federal level.

Anthony addressed the action regarding baiting distances from bores. He explained it will be part of the APVMA guidelines which have not been received yet and individual property plans.

## 3. Planning and Approvals – update on progress to date

*Chief Scientist Human Health Risk Assessment*

Andrew gave an update on the Human Health Risk Assessment being undertaken under the oversight of the NSW Office of the Chief Scientist and Engineer (OCSE). The successful applicants to undertake the assessment are consultants Ramboll Environ and the OCSE have now awarded a contract to them. The consultants will be on the Island from 9 to 10 November 2016. The OCSE will issue a householder to notify people of meeting times and schedules. Andrew asked Frank for his view on the process for engaging the consultants. Frank said he was amazed and impressed with how rigorous and thorough the process had been. Andrew explained the role of the expert panel in the Human Health Risk Assessment process. Beth asked Andrew how many people were on the Expert Panel. Andrew said it was made up of 4 members: The Chief Scientist and Engineer; Professor Mary O’Kane, Dr Chris Armstrong also from the OCSE, and two independent experts; Professor Brian Priestly from Monash University and Professor Emeritus Stephen Leader from the University of Sydney. Andrew said that CVs for the two experts had previously been provided in an earlier CWG meeting and he could give them to Beth as well if she wished.

Penny reminded the group that consultants Ramboll Environ and a member of the OCSE team will be visiting the Island in the next 2 weeks to conduct community meetings. More information on timing will follow.

#### *EPBC application progress*

Andrew gave an update on the Federal EPBC approval process. He advised the group that the final guidelines for the Public Environment Report (PER) have been issued and the PER is being prepared for public exhibition. Andrew has received verbal feedback that the PER has been assessed by the Commonwealth as adequate for the 20 day public exhibition period but this requires formal notification. Penny clarified that we can't put the report on public display, until the Commonwealth gives the go-ahead. Andrew explained that the PER report will be available on the Board's website, at the Sydney Office of the Office of Local Government, in the offices of the Lord Howe Island Board and at the museum.

#### *Other applications*

Andrew gave an update on the Species Impact Statement (SIS) and NSW Fisheries & Marine Parks applications. He said that these permit applications are in the process of development. He advised the group that the Board has not yet heard anything back in relation to the APVMA application submitted earlier in the year.

#### *Property management planning*

Anthony gave an update on the Property Management Planning process. He told the group that the Island Cleanup had now removed over 400 cubic metres of waste from the island and the aim was for the cleanup to be completed by late December 2016. He explained that property planning activities will be increased in the coming months in preparation for a Board decision on the program in February.

#### *Operational Planning*

Andrew explained that Taronga Zoo staff had visited the Island looking at the nursery site for the captive management of currawongs and woodhens. Designs for the site and cages will be progressed in the near future along with a development application for the captive management facility.

Therese asked how many birds will be taken into captivity. Andrew said that 80- 85% of woodhens and 50-60% of currawongs will be kept in captivity during the program. Currawongs will be kept in pairs.

Esven asked whether it was a large cost for cages. Andrew said that a final figure had yet to be determined but it will be substantial. Vets will also be present on the island at key stages to maintain the health of the captive populations.

Andrew provided the group with an update on the Request for Tender for lodges to provide figures on providing accommodation for workers during the program and what bedding is available. Also being prepared at present are the detector dog and helicopter tenders. Penny explained to the group that a large workforce will be required for the program if it goes ahead.

Anthony gave an update on owl eradication planning and explained that some trapping will be undertaken of owls in the short term as community members have reported the owls killing other bird species, particularly white terns. Anthony explained that changes in firearms legislation have to be followed up before any shooting will be undertaken as part of owl eradication. He is following up with the firearms officers to ensure all new requirements are met.

#### *Biodiversity outcomes monitoring*

Andrew gave an update on Biodiversity Impacts and the studies that have been undertaken. These included rodent impacts on seabirds, land birds, palms and invertebrates. Anthony showed the group some pictures of rodent predation on Little Shearwater chicks from burrows and palm seed being eaten by rats during recent trials on Transit Hill and other areas of the island. The photos were taken with motion cameras to determine rodent impacts on native vegetation and Little Shearwater colonies as part of the Biodiversity Monitoring component of the project.

Andrew told the group that the Economic Study is nearing completion and will be sent out to the group as soon as it's completed.

Beth asked if the Public Environment Report (PER) had looked at the feasibility of undertaking the program using bait stations only.

Beth said that she had heard that the NSW Chief Scientist was an Engineer, not a Doctor. Penny explained that her title is Chief Health Scientist and Engineer and her role is to source the right expertise in the fields of toxicology and human health. Andrew said that the panel includes Professors and a Medical Doctor, all experts in the field of toxicology.

#### **4. CWG Issues**

The option of rodent sterilisation technology called "Contrapest", developed by SenesTech Ltd in the USA was raised by a CWG member.

Anthony advised that Contrapest has been investigated for both the LHI program and by other rodent eradication programs internationally and its use would be experimental hence it is not currently considered a feasible option for rodent eradication in the foreseeable future.

Repeated baiting of uncertain oral contraceptives on an inhabited and rugged island across seasons or capturing, vaccinating, and releasing every member of a single gender of the LHI rodent population is unfeasible. This lack of data and tools disqualifies the use of fertility control from detailed consideration.

Information providing more detail on this issue is attached to the minutes.

#### **5. Communication**

Penny asked the group if they would like to change the way communication happens and information is distributed to the group. Anthony explained that the REP would prefer not to communicate individually with people via Facebook as we like to give people the opportunity to discuss issues face to face and with one on one consultation. Anthony said Facebook can be an opportunity to get personal and nasty in some instances. Beth agreed.

Jack suggested a movie night to show some more footage of rats foraging and predating to give the community an update on what occurs at night. He also volunteered to provide some camera footage trails of bait stations with rodents engaging with them in the field.

#### **6. Other Business**

There was no other business

#### **7. Next Meeting**

Next meeting scheduled for the last week of November 2016.

Meeting finished at 5.30pm.