

Noosa Oyster Restoration Project

Technical Advisory Group (TAG)

Meeting 2 Minutes

Date – Thursday, 20 August 2020

Time – 10.00 am – 1.00 pm

Location – Zoom call

Facilitator – Craig Bohm, TNC

Agenda

	Topic	Lead	Time allocation	Time
1	Welcome to Country / Acknowledgement of Country	Kabi Kabi or Craig Bohm - TNC	5 minutes	10.00am
2	Introductions and agenda review	Craig Bohm - TNC	5 minutes	10.05am
3	Revised ToR + declarations	Craig Bohm - TNC	5 minutes	10.10am
4	TNC restoration projects elsewhere	Simon Branigan	30 minutes	10.15am
5	Habitat Suitability Model + Restoration Suitability Model + sites	Callum Dittes - TNC	30 minutes	10.45am
6	Substrate design + permits	Craig Bohm - TNC	25 minutes	11.15am
	Tea Break Virtual coffee scroll + large skinny decaf latte coffees (on soy) all round		20 minutes	11.40am
7	TNC Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting methodology	Simon Reeves - TNC	30 minutes	11.50pm
8	Annual Report	Craig Bohm - TNC	30 minutes	12.20 pm
9	Other business		10 minutes	12.50 pm
	Meeting close			1.00pm

1. Welcome to Country

The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Noosa Shire Council (NSC) and this technical advisory group acknowledges the Cubbi Cubbi (Kabi Kabi) as the Traditional Owners of the places in which we work. We also honour the deep cultural, social, environmental, spiritual and economic connection the Kabi Kabi people share with their lands and waters.

2. TAG members

David Moffett, Principal Environment Officer, Aquatic Ecosystem Health, Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Science in the Department of Environment and Science (DES) has been invited onto the TAG. David has extensive experience in estuarine ecology and water quality monitoring and management. David is currently in the field, but we hope to welcome him to the TAG at the next meeting. The project manager (PM) will follow up with David prior to the next meeting.

The PM, with permission from Noosa Council, has been in direct contact with Kabi Kabi representatives. The PM reported that it is unlikely that Kabi Kabi will participate directly in TAG meetings but understands that they are support of the project. The PM plans to meet with Kabi Kabi directly, in close liaison with Noosa Council, and will discuss appropriate engagement options with them. The TAG supported this approach.

3. Revised ToR + declarations

Noosa Council requested that the TAG include a pecuniary interest clause into the ToR for the TAG. The TAG agreed to the following amendment (expressed in blue).

NOOSA RIVER OYSTER RESTORATION PROJECT

Technical Advisory Group, Revised Terms of Reference (DRAFT)

Context

The *Noosa River Oyster Restoration Project* is a component of Noosa's "Bringing Back the Fish" project, an initiative in three stages, which aims to rehabilitate native oyster reefs, which previously occurred in the Noosa River estuary.

The result of this work should be an increase in the complexity of natural infrastructure in the Noosa River thus maximising the ecological, economic and social benefits that stem from rehabilitating the reefs to the Noosa community.

This is a partnership project between Noosa Shire Council (NSC), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), key government and non-government stakeholders and the community of Noosa Shire.

Purpose

The purpose of this Technical Advisory Group (TAG) is to:

- Support detailed project planning for the *Noosa Oyster Reef Restoration Project* that will see reefs re-established in the Noosa River estuary by June 2022.
- Provide ongoing expert advice on the implementation of the Project Plan, and support in overcoming legislative, scientific and practical barriers that occur during the term of the project.
- Ensure that the Project meets all technical, statutory and policy requirements in a timely manner to the satisfaction of relevant decision-making authorities.
- Ensure actions within the Project Plan are effectively delivered and communicated to all stakeholders.

Term

All members of the TAG shall meet at least quarterly during the term of the project up until September 2022, either in person or through a video link. The role of the group, and its terms of reference, will be reviewed should the project be extended beyond that timeframe.

Membership

Membership of the TAG shall include representation from key agencies with a legislative, technical or policy management role, as well other organisations with a level of expertise in the project such that they can make a valuable, independent, input. This membership will be determined by TNC and NSC, subject to the *Alliance and Funding Agreement* for the project.

The TAG shall include the following members (or proxies nominated by each agency):

- The Nature Conservancy – Project Coordinator and restoration technical advisor
- Noosa Shire Council – Environmental Services Manager + one other relevant officer
- Department of Environment & Science (permits and approvals expert)
- Department of Agriculture & Fisheries (with fisheries and permitting expertise)
- Maritime Safety Queensland (with local river navigation expertise)
- Kabi Kabi Traditional Owner
- Independent aquatic ecologist/biologist – one or two, as selected by NSC and TNC.

Roles and Responsibilities

Members of the TAG will:

- attend all scheduled TAG meetings (in person where possible, and electronically otherwise), and if necessary nominate a proxy;
- review and provide input to the implementation planning of the Noosa River Oyster Restoration Project;
- contribute relevant technical, policy and any other advice in a timely and informative manner;
- liaise with, and facilitate the attendance, of other relevant personnel within their respective agency from time to time, to articulate details of key policy requirements;
- facilitate communications of relevance to other TAG members as it relates to this Project in a timely manner;
- contribute to, and participate in communication initiatives outlined in the finalised Project Plan;
- contribute to the TNC Monitoring and Evaluation Plan at key stages of preparation; and
- contribute to the TNC Comprehensive Risk Assessment to ensure it is accurate and relevant.

TNC undertakes to:

- chair and provide executive support for the TAG - including the preparation and distribution of meeting agendas and associated documents; arranging meeting times and venues; preparing and distributing meeting outcomes and actions; and
- provide TAG members with adequate information about the Project in timely and informed manner to ensure that TAG members are able to respond to technical issues and policy requirements within agreed timeframes, as outlined in the Project Plan.

Disclosure of interests

Each TAG member is to disclose their interests as they may relate to their role on the TAG. Once these interests are initially declared, it is the responsibility of each member to update the TAG if these interests change in any way relating to their role on the TAG. A member may also make a discretionary disclosure at any time to the TAG out of session.

Conflicts of interests

Where a conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest arises, the matter will be considered by TNC + Noosa Shire Council and, where appropriate, reverted to the TAG for consideration.

As a minimum, where a conflict, or perceived conflict of interest arises, the member to which that conflict pertains will be excluded from any decision-making process in the TAG relating to that area of conflict. The matter and its resolution will also be noted in the minutes of the relevant TAG meeting.

4. TNC restoration projects elsewhere

TNC Operations Manager (Oceans), Simon Branigan, present the TAG with an insight to the Port Phillip Bay Shellfish Restoration Project, which has been running for more than 5 years.

Simon managed, and continues to manage this project, as it progresses from strength to strength offering valuable insights applicable to shellfish restoration work elsewhere including in Noosa.

5. Habitat Suitability Model + Restoration Suitability Model

TNC Intern – Callum Dittes, presented the *Habitat Suitability Model* and *Restoration Suitability Model* for Noosa and explained the context and content of this work and its application. Key points included:

Key points:

- Habitat suitability modelling ensures that the Noosa River estuary provides the right environment for restoring rock oyster ecosystems.
- Restoration suitability modelling considers socio-economic parameters, which shape the selection of restoration ‘footprint’ sites (presented below).
- The habitat and restoration suitability models advise the placement and configuration of restoration substrates within these footprints.
- The Noosa community will be consulted formally to ensure these sites are widely supported. Informally, support has been consistent.
- The models can be further refined, as more information becomes available, but will not impede further role out of the project.

The PM presented the potential restoration sites to the TAG and discussed the process for their selection. The sites are presented below. Three sites occur inside Fish Habitat Areas (Upper and lower Weyba Creek and Goat Island). Two sites fall outside FHAs (Noosa Sound and Tewantin).

The TAG agreed that the sites are appropriate to be presented for formal public consultation and acknowledged that further detailed site assessments are in progress. The TAG also emphasised that the project will also undertake specific site evaluations with key agencies, particularly DAF and MSQ.



Figure 1: Generalised map showing locations of the 5 potential restoration sites



Figure 2: Upper Weyba Creek – Site 1



Figure 3: Lower Weyba Creek – Site 2



Figure 4: Lower Weyba Creek – Site 3



Figure 5: Goat Island – Site 4

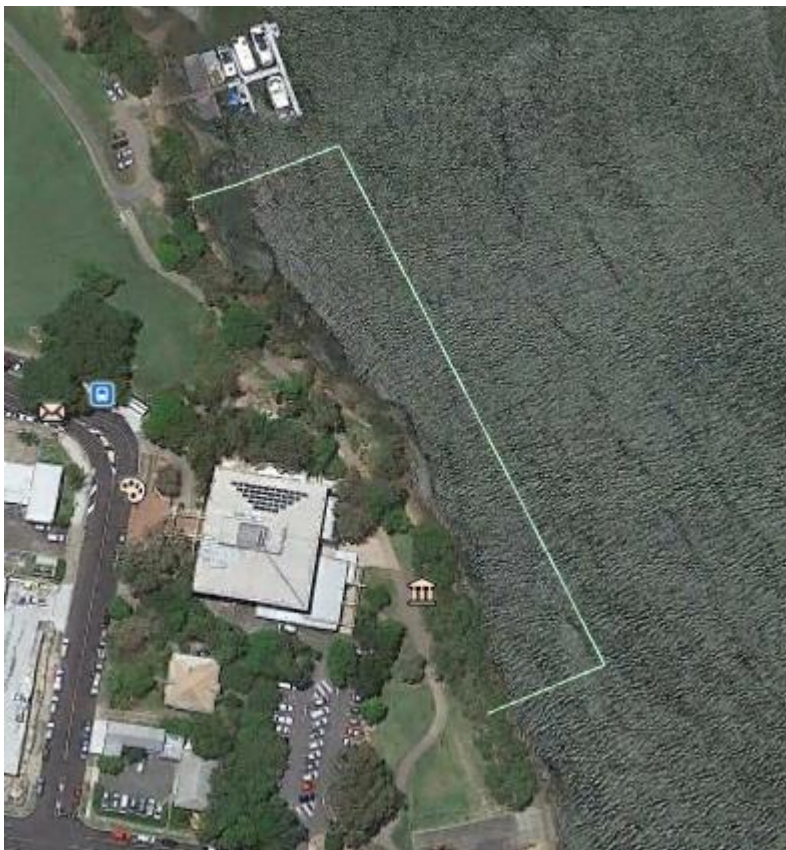


Figure 6: Tewantin – Site 5

6. Substrate design + permits

Substrate:

The project plans to engage an engineering firm to help develop an engineered restoration framework for the project. The guidance would address issues such as stability, durability and erosion potential of the substrate plus meet ecological criteria set by the project.

The engineers would be required to certify the restoration framework, which would be included in permit applications, the 'as built' restoration substrates, to meet with anticipated permit conditions, and signage specifications.

The project would seek government approval for the restoration framework, restoration sites and signage design.

The TAG acknowledged that the detail of this work would be presented at the next TAG.

Permits:

The TAG considered the following points:

- Integration of shell, live and dead into the substrate design – to form aggregate lock
- Maritime safety aspects
- Signage requirements

TAG members agreed to follow up, out of session, to discuss these matters in more detail. Engineers would consider the concept of aggregate lock, and this will be discussed further with the TAG.

The project team and MSQ would visit the potential restoration sites and discuss safety aspects.

A sub-group of TAG members would liaise over the topic of signage with the view that the project would likely develop a signage plan to support relevant permit applications.

7. Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (MER)

TNC Oceans Restoration Scientist, Simon Reeves, presented an overview of the project Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (MER) methodology that will be applied in Noosa. Detail of the Noosa MER Plan would be presented at the next meeting pending an independent review of the plan by consultants appointed by Noosa Council.

8. Annual Report

The project manager presented an overview of the draft annual project report. The TAG was asked to provide initial feedback in the meeting, and then to review the draft report, out of session.
