

Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands Technical Reference Group

Minutes: 14 March 2006, 7pm, Edithvale Bowling Club.

The Agenda and draft Terms of Reference were distributed prior to the meeting.

Meeting Opened: 7.10pm

Independent Chair: John Arup

Attendees: David Danner (local resident), Tania Ireton (Bird Observers Club of Australia), Max Juler (City of Kingston), Graham Malcolm (Aspendale Gardens Residents Ass), Jane Satchwell (Mordialloc Schools Cluster), Andrew Silcocks (Birds Australia), Michael Walker (local resident), Les Williams (Friends of the Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands)

Melbourne Water reps: Wayne Charlton, Paul Minifie (project consultant), Greg Bain, Salyana Williams, Gillian Macdonald, and Charlotte Allen

Apologies: Steve Compton (Bunurong Land Council)

Other attendees: Michael Ryan – observer

Welcome and Introduction:

Members were introduced. A list of reference group members and their contact details were distributed after this was agreed to by those present.

Wayne Charlton (Melbourne Water):

Presented an overview of Melbourne Water, its roles and responsibilities, and development of the discovery centre concept. (Presentation overheads attached.)

Paul Minifie (Nixon Minifie Architects):

Presented an overview of the siting considerations for the discovery centre and concept plan. Work has not started on the design of the discovery centre. (The concept plan to be provided to reference group members on CD.)

Issues raised in relation to the discovery centre plan were:

- Need to consider how to include permanent water body in front of discovery centre without interfering with wetlands operation given that it is a peat-lined suspended wetland.
- The Friends of Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands consider Edithvale South not a place for boardwalks.
- Need to recognise that the buffer distances defined in the Ramsar Management Plan and the wetland buffer zone between the wetland and adjacent housing are different.
- Issues related to the picnic area and how this should be managed in terms of access and after hours 'activities'. The existing fence is poorly maintained.
- Access to the discovery centre will be through a booking system managed by Melbourne Water to control access. Small groups will be able to access the centre.
- Location and design of the parking area associated with the discovery centre could be an issue for local residents.
- Community groups will be able to book discovery centre for meetings.
- Pathway surface needs careful consideration. Gravel paths are not suitable as they are very noisy, leads to disturbance of birds and therefore unsuitable for bird watching.
- Water levels in the Edithvale South wetland will always fluctuate in response to weather conditions as these are ephemeral wetlands. They will not require rehydration as the ecosystem relies on the changes in water content. This will be captured in the interpretative displays in the centre.
- Role of the Friends of the Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands in the management of the centre needs to be discussed. The Friends are very keen to have a role.
- Disabled access needed for the centre and educational aspects will need to take those with special needs into consideration.
- Discussion and consideration of the existing bird hide will be required. Melbourne Water will consult the Friends of the Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands, Birds Australia and the Bird Observers Club. There are a number of existing problems with the hide and it probably does not meet OH&S requirements.

Other matters:

The submission sent to Melbourne Water by Michael Ryan will be tabled at the next meeting. This will be considered by Melbourne Water as part of the review of the Ramsar Management Plan.

Terms of Reference:

It was agreed that the first dot point should read – "Provide advice on the design of the proposed discovery centre and associated infrastructure".

Way Forward:

Melbourne Water needs to begin engineering works and preliminary design for the centre. These will provide information and items for discussion at the next meeting. This will take about six weeks. To allow for this the next meeting date was set for 23 May. Melbourne Water will provide a progress report to the technical reference group members before the meeting.

Reference group members agreed that 7pm on a Tuesday was a suitable meeting time.
Venue confirmed for future meetings as the Edithvale Bowling Club.
Meeting closed at 9pm

Next meeting: 23 May, 7pm Edithvale Bowling Club