**Darling Downs Residents Association**

**Minutes from the AGM**

**Conducted on 13 October 2021**

# DDRA Annual General Meeting

The Darling Downs Residents Association (DDRA) Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held at the Foxton Street Hall in Oakford on 13October 2021.

# Meeting Opened

The meeting opened at 7.39 PM.

# Present

The following people attended the AGM:

Keith Ellis, Penny Ellis, Bruce Hilliard, Pam Hilliard, Peter Benson, Sandra Hawkins, Shirlee Donders, Perry Holland, Clare Ransom, Dan Rundle, David & Helen Ransom, Kevin Brimblecombe, Grant Sycamore, John Holligan, Steve & Sally Starling, Pip & Brian Schupp, Wendy Leach, Eric Chabros, Roby & Brian Vale, Dean Strautins, Andrew Smith, Fiona Lowe, Karen Nelson, Bill Denham, Morgan Byas, Carol Fawcett, Sue Gilbert, Peter Cappendale, John Watson, Trevor Hayes, Michael Slade Smith, Rodney Eden Street, and Michelle Rich.

From these attendees, Sandra Hawkins, Fiona Lowe, Morgan Byas, and Michelle Rich were not members. Additionally, Dean Strautins is an Associate member. All other attendees were Ordinary Members of the DDRA.

# Apologies

Dave Emery forwarded an apology for not attending.

# Previous AGM Minutes

After opening the floor to discuss the previous AGM Minutes, a vote was conducted on the following resolution.

## Resolution

To accept the minutes of the AGM dated 28 September 2020 and the outcomes of any matters arising from the minutes.

Proposed by: Shirlee Donders

Seconded by: Carol Fawcett

Vote outcome: ***Carried unanimously***

# The DDRA Strategic Development Plan

Bruce Hilliard explained the status of the DDRA Strategic Development Plan (SDP). This explanation included information on the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale (SoSJ), the Workstreams, and the development of the DDRA website. The coverage of these issues is outlined in the following subsections.

## MOU

The protracted negotiations required to implement the MOU were summarised. Additionally, the delay in funding the DDRA activities was explained, and the implications for the Workstreams *(see below)* were broadly outlined. The key point was that delays in the provision of funding hindered the implementation of important activities. The attendees were also advised that a new Heads of Agreement (HoA) will need to be initiated before the end of the 2021/22 Financial Year (FY) to replace the existing MOU. This agreement will be essential to ensure that adequate funding continues to be provided to support the maintenance and development of the Darling Downs Equestrian Estate (DDEE).

## Workstreams

The following points provide an outline of the existing and planned Workstreams, which will be promulgated later in the year within the updated SDP:

* ***Workstream 1:*** *Day Yards.* This project has been **delayed**. However, after three years of requesting a grant from the SoSJ, the Shire has agreed to proceed with the development of these Day Yards. A Shire survey indicated that 66.4% of respondents want this project to proceed, and 90.5% believed that the SoSJ should fund the development of these facilities. The SoSJ have indicated that they will manage and implement the project. At this stage, the SoSJ has not identified the implementation timeframe. The DDRA Committee will continue to work with the SoSJ to help expedite this Workstream.
* ***Workstream 2:*** *Rest Area.* This project had been **delayed** due to a lack of funding. As funding has now been forthcoming from the SoSJ, this Workstream can now be implemented. It is intended to complete this activity during the current Financial Year.
* ***Workstream 3:*** *Car Park upgrade.* The upgrade of the Evening Peal Court carpark has been **completed** in this Workstream. Additional work, which involves laying out power poles to help outline the Rain Lover Court carpark and approaches, has been **delayed** due to the soft ground over winter. It is intended that this task will be completed later this calendar year. A big thank you to **Peter Benson** and his team for their efforts in this Workstream.
* ***Workstream 4:*** *Vegetation Management.* Workstream 4 defines an **ongoing** project, and significant work has already been completed this FY. Further work is planned. See the comment below this listing of Workstreams, which is related to the amount of work conducted.
* ***Workstream 5:*** *Firefighting water tank.* An investigation conducted with DFES indicated that this Workstream is not required. Consequently, it has been **cancelled**.
* ***Workstream 6:*** *Gates and Fences.* The original project scope has been **completed** by fitting barrier gates at the Evening Peal Court and Rain Lover Court access points to the 50 Acres area (Reserve R35701). These barriers have already stopped three bolting horses from getting out onto the roads. Additionally, two **new** safety barriers *(which were described as Workstream 12 during the AGM)* will be included as future tasks in this Workstream. It is currently planned that these safety barriers will include a gate and chicane on Wungong Road South and a gate on the Kentucky fields bridle trail near Thomas Road.
* ***Workstream 7:*** *Safety Control & Vehicular Access:* This Workstream was **delayed** while the MOU was being finalised. Now that the MOU is in place, this **ongoing** Workstream will help to address safety concerns within the DDEE. To achieve this objective, the DDRA will collaborate with the Shire to investigate and instigate appropriate resolutions to identified safety issues.
* ***Workstream 8:*** *Maintenance.* This is an **ongoing** Workstream, which is focused on maintaining facilities within the DDEE. See the paragraph following this listing, which describes the amount of work already completed.
* ***Workstream 9:*** *Fencing along Thomas Road.* This project was raised at the last AGM. However, a joint investigation conducted with the SoSJ found that this objective was not appropriate for inclusion due to costs, risks, the need to access the associated drain for maintenance, and the presence of buried services in that vicinity. Consequently, this Workstream has been **cancelled**. In the next SDP, the tasks outlined for Workstream 10 during the AGM will be defined as Workstream 9.
* ***Workstream 10.*** *Lot 55 Empire Rose Trail Upgrade.* Two years ago, a resident identified that a Public Access Way (PAW) in the vicinity of Empire Rose Court was not being maintained under the reserves defined by the preceding MOU. This lack of maintenance reflected the fact that the area in question was not a part of the DDEE reserves. After investigating this matter with the SoSJ and other stakeholders, this area has now been brought into the new MOU. Consequently, this was a **new** Workstream. Under this Workstream *(new Workstream 9)*, it is intended that clearance and other improvements will be implemented in this area. These new parts of the integrated trails will then be managed under Workstreams 4 and 8.
* ***Workstream 11.*** This is a **new** Workstream. Available power poles not required for Workstream 3 will be used to replace or create new cross country jumps in the 50 Acres area (Reserve R35701). Within the updated SDP, this will become Workstream 10.

As outlined during the AGM, more than 1200 person-hours of work have been implemented to support Workstreams 4 and 8 since 1 July 2020. Based on the Shire’s rate for valuation of effort ($35 per hour), this equates to more than $42,000 of value delivered by DDRA volunteers to the SoSJ and the DDEE users. Consequently, the SoSJ is gaining a strong return on its investment of funds into the DDRA. The DDRA would also like to take this opportunity to thank all of our volunteers for their great work in maintaining the DDEE.

## DDRA Website

Peter Benson described and demonstrated the new DDRA website. This website is a key tool required to coordinate maintenance, support activities and events within the DDEE. Additionally, this website explains DDEE facilities, types of activities that can be conducted, and usage guidelines. It also provides enough history about the area and the DDRA so that users can make informed decisions. In other words, the DDRA website is designed to help users and other stakeholders by giving them the information they need to make the best use of this important Public Open Space.

The website is also designed to engage volunteers and businesses, so the resources of the local community can be applied more effectively. This engagement will include implementing a business register to help the local community access support and services, improve local marketing, and generate revenue that can be ploughed back into developing and maintaining the DDEE/DDRA facilities.

Lastly, the website will help improve communications between stakeholders and the DDRA so that the organisation can be even more inclusive.

The DDRA would like to formally thank **Peter Benson** for his hard work on this project so that the website can deliver these outcomes cost-effectively.

## Resolution

To accept the updated report on the implementation of the DDRA Strategic Development Plan.

Proposed by: Keith Ellis

Seconded by: Shirlee Donders

Vote outcome: ***Carried unanimously***

# Identify New Works and Concerns

The AGM attendees were asked to provide recommendations for additional Workstreams or other activities that need to be considered within the next SDP and Annual Management Plan (AMP). Attendees provided the following recommendations:

* ***Recommendation 1.*** It was recommended that the DDRA liaise with Mr Armstrong to proactively help identify and minimise risks associated with the developments to the east of the 50 Acres Reserve.
* ***Recommendation 2.*** Participants in the meeting identified that some people were walking their dogs in the DDEE without having them on leads. It was noted that uncontrolled dogs in the DDEE could lead to a tragic accident *(e.g. a horse being attacked by a dog and spooked, which could lead to the rider or horse being killed or injured)*. Consequently, the attendees recommended that:
	+ The DDRA formally advise the SoSJ of the problem and request that the Shire Ranger patrol the area more frequently.
	+ The SoSJ post signage in appropriate locations within the DDEE to remind owners to keep their dogs on the lead while using the DDEE reserves and trails.
* ***Recommendation 3.*** It was recommended that a concrete floor be created for the DDRA shed (near Evening Peal Court). This flooring is required to improve equipment storage and conduct maintenance and other activities in the shed.
* ***Recommendation 4.*** Signs should be erected in the vicinity of the Evening Peal Court and Rain Lover Court car parks to:
	+ remind users that volunteers predominantly maintain the DDEE, so they should respect the area;
	+ ask the participants to volunteer their time to support the maintenance of the area through the DDRA and Busy Bees; and
	+ list the dates of the forthcoming Busy Bees and provide the website, where they can get more details and volunteer to provide support.

## Resolution

To accept the proposals for inclusion in the DDRA SDP and for the DDRA Committee to initiate and conduct appropriate tasks needed to implement the approved projects.

Proposed by: Brian Vale

Seconded by: Eric Chabros

Vote outcome: ***Carried unanimously***

As a result of this vote, the following actions will be taken:

* ***Recommendation 1.*** The DDRA Committee will open a dialogue and collaboration with Mr Armstrong as soon as it is practicable.
* ***Recommendation 2.*** This will be managed through a new Workstream 5 in the SDP.
* ***Recommendation 3.*** This activity will be managed through a new Workstream 11 in the SDP.
* ***Recommendation 4.*** A new Workstream 12 will be initiated in the SDP to implement this recommendation.

# Present/consider Committee’s Annual Report

The Committee’s report was provided with the notification for the AGM. This report included information on progress and setbacks, the MOU renegotiation, thanks to everyone who provided assistance, and information on becoming a member. These issues were discussed in more detail before taking the vote on the following resolution.

## Resolution

To accept the DDRA Committee’s Report.

 Proposed by: Peter Benson

Seconded by: Shirlee Donders

Vote outcome: ***Carried unanimously***

# Treasurers Report

The Treasurer (Carol Fawcett) presented an updated report on the finances of the DDRA. The synopsis report, which covers the period from 1 July 2020 to 12 October 2021, is provided below.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Income** |   |   |   | **Bendigo Bank Account Reconciliation** |
|  Sale of Ride-on mower |  $ 1,620.00  |  |   |  Opening Balance 1st July 2020 |  $ 12,311.14  |
|  Shire MOU Funding |  $ 10,000.00  |  |   |  Add Income |  $ 11,622.72  |
|  Interest |  $ 2.72  |  |   |  Less Expenditure |  $ 10,316.72  |
|  **Total Income** |  $ 11,622.72  |  |   |  Reconciliation Balance 12/10/21 |  **$ 13,617.14**  |
|   |   |   |   |  From Bank Balance |  **$ 13,617.14**  |
|  |
|  **Expenditure** |   |   |   |   |   |
|  Capital Purchases |  $ 1,815.00  |  |  |  |    |
|  Administration Expenses |  $ 389.96  |  |  |  |   |
|  Bank Fees |  $ 7.60  |  |  |  |   |
|  Insurance |  $ 2,089.88  |  |  |  |    |
|  Tractor Fuel |  $ 350.07  |  |  |  |   |
|  Tractor Maintenance |  $ 283.98  |  |  |  |   |
|  Seeding & Signage |  $ 1,070.75  |  |  |  |   |
|  Volunteer support |  $ 392.82  |  |  |  |   |
|  Miscellaneous |  $ 217.70  |  |  |  |   |
|  Bank Fees |  $ 3.20  |  |  |  |   |
|  Tractor Fuel |  $ 152.40  |  |  |  |   |
|  Seed for 70 Acres |  $ 54.00  |  |  |  |   |
|  Website Development |  $ 1,262.67  |  |  |  |   |
|  Tractor Maintenance Equipment |  $ 136.81  |  |  |  |   |
|  Insurance |  $ 2,089.88  |  |  |  |   |
|  **Expenditure for the period** |  $ 10,316.72  |  |  |  |   |
|   |   |   |   |   |   |

## Resolution

To accept the DDRA Treasurers Report.

Proposed by: Keith Ellis

Seconded by: Robyn Vale

Vote outcome: ***Carried unanimously***

# Election of Committee Members

As the President intended to stand down at the end of his tenure, and many other Committee members had reached the end of their three-year term, all positions were opened for re-election at this AGM. The following members were elected uncontested at the AGM.

President: Bruce Hilliard

Vice President: Peter Benson

Secretary: Penny Ellis

Treasurer: Carol Fawcett

The current Ordinary Committee Members were not contested at the AGM. However, it was unclear if some of the following members were still volunteers as they could not attend the AGM. The DDRA Committee will identify their ongoing participation at the earliest opportunity. No other attendee volunteered to join the Committee as an Ordinary Committee Member.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Robyn Vale  | Brian Vale  |
| Pam Hilliard | Brian Schupp |
| Dave Emery | Matt Emery |
| Denelle Kennedy |  |

## Resolution

To elect the Office Holders and Ordinary Committee Members *(subject to them still being volunteers)* to the DDRA Committee.

Proposed by: Shirlee Donders

Seconded by: Keith Ellis

Vote out come: ***Carried unanimously***

# Working Groups

The three DDRA Working Groups were explained. Volunteers were requested from the attendees to join the Working Groups. In particular, Peter Benson also explained the importance of the work being conducted by the Maintenance & Works group. He noted that the DDRA now had seven qualified tractor drivers that share the workload for the slashing of the DDEE as a part of Workstream 4. The DDRA also provided a huge thank you to them and to **Peter Benson** and **Brian Schupp** for their ongoing efforts.

# Presentations by Prospective Shire Councillors

As a part of an effort to give attendees the opportunity to understand the platforms for the three pertinent candidates in the 16 October 2021 SJ Shire Councillors election, the DDRA invited them to speak at the AGM. Morgan Byas, Fiona Lowe, and Sandra Hawkins each provided a short presentation.

# General Business

The following general business was raised:

* An attendee (Mr Grant Sycamore) raised the problem of long grass on many of the verges in the DDEE and on Rain Lover Court in particular. This long grass limits visibility, which could lead to an accident. The Shire was asked to address this issue as a matter of priority.
* Mr Sycamore also commented on the poor state of the bitumen and the lack of a turnaround at the eastern end of Rain Lover Court. Unfortunately, a turnaround was not included in the initial construction of the road in this area. He requested that a turnaround be implemented at this site, and the bitumen be repaired as a matter of priority for the SoSJ. Increased traffic in this area appears to be accelerating damage to the surface, which is likely to become more costly to repair if action is not taken soon.
* As a follow-on to the preceding points, Michelle Rich (SJ Shire President) explained that the SoSJ has a request form on their website, which people can fill in to identify problems in the area. The problems these notifications identify can then be integrated within the works program so they can be addressed. The DDRA advised that they will provide a link to this SoSJ web page through our website and let stakeholders know about this through the DDRA Facebook page.
* A resident asked why roadside rubbish pick up was no longer available. Michelle Rich and other stakeholders explained that it was no longer cost effective to implement roadside pick-up. However, Michelle Rich pointed out that the Watkins Road Transfer Station had been reopened to accept most rubbish and recyclables for free. The exception is that a small charge ($20) will be applied for recycling mattresses.
* On behalf of the DDRA, Peter Benson made the following statement regarding Vanessa Slater from the SoSJ. ‘Since around 2015, I have been communicating with Vanessa Slater, the Coordinator Natural Reserves, regarding issues to do with the DDRA. She has been a fantastic liaison officer from the Shire. From tree management to weed management, trail and drain maintenance, fire permit applications, future maintenance requirements, as well as grant applications and Strategic Plan liaisons, we have dealt with many issues together. I would like to personally thank her for all her advice, guidance and work liaising with different Shire Councilors and Shire employees over the past few years.’
* The new DDRA President thanked Keith Ellis for his many years of service to this organisation and the numerous users of the facilities in the DDEE. He has been a bulwark of the organisation for ten years and has devoted himself as President of the organisation for more than eight of those years. We owe Keith a debt of gratitude for his efforts over this period, as he has worked to ensure that the DDRA continues to grow and provide consistently better service to the users of the area.

# Meeting Closed

The meeting closed at 9.21 PM.

*I attest that, to the best of my recollection, these Minutes accurately reflect the proceedings during and outcomes from this AGM. However, in accordance with the DDRA Rules of Association, these minutes must still be accepted at a following General Meeting as part of the ratification process.*

*Signed as an attestation by the Chairperson for the meeting.*

Name: Bruce Hilliard Role: Chairperson & President