

Connecting Country Background

Reference Group Meeting April 3rd, 2008

Present: Doug Ralph, Marie Jones, Eve Banks, Bernard Slattery, Patrick Kavanagh, Jan Hall, Elvyne Hogan, Beth Mellick, Geoff Park, Peter Johnson, Nicole Bullen, Julie von Platen

Apologies: David Major, Zoe Amor, Maurie Dynon, Virginia Adrian, Tim Read, Christine Kilmartin, Deirdre Slattery, Chris Pollock

Visitor: Karen Alexander

The minutes of the March meeting were accepted [FBS/JH]

Arising

1. Bernard and Doug tabled a statement on World Heritage listing for the Castlemaine Diggings NHP. This will be considered at a future meeting. [Doc is attached for those who were unable to attend]
2. Changing weather patterns: Tim and Christine were absent.

General Business

1. Info sharing session on the 12th: Beth reported. A roster of volunteers to staff the session for part or all from 9 to 1 was compiled. There will be a meeting of volunteers at 9 am next Tuesday for a briefing on how to field enquiries, etc, Media release etc. Patrick reported that the release has been drafted and will be circulated from this evening. Marie reported on distribution of flyers.
2. 'Casual' or 'incidental' visitors to info sharing session: these are very important, and methods of encouraging their response were canvassed.
3. Website: Zoe has all the relevant documents to register this. The construction of the site can proceed, but the interactive section is complex, and may take time - perhaps till the next phase of the project. The Website committee is Julie, Geoff and Marie.
4. Project officer report: Julie presented the feedback forms for consideration. It was decided to add 'Your information is protected by privacy laws' to the sheets. The feedback forms will be emailed to landcare groups in advance where possible. A hard copy will be included in the next CMA mailout. A separate feedback page will be offered to 'non landholders' or interested newcomers. The subgroup of volunteers will decide on Tuesday on manner of collecting the sheets.
5. Benchmark measures for the success of stage one: It was decided not to be pedantic about this, but a number of considerations were raised:
 - Raw response figures
 - Number of landcare group responses
 - Effectiveness of the reference group process in the construction of the blueprint

It was suggested that the website could accommodate anecdotes, blog-type reports and other means of setting out how the project has proceeded.

Beth will document the process for the Wettenhall Foundation.

6. Representation: The meeting stressed the importance of Shire, Land for Wildlife, DPI and DSE involvement, and with the possibility of specific focus groups being planned. Victoria Naturally: Karen gave a briefing on the history and activities of this coalition, and offered help to the project in responding to the upcoming Green Paper.
7. Expanding discussion on the range of the project: the importance of this was accepted, especially in the light of recent sustainability projects in the shire, but it was decided to postpone it to a future meeting.