
**SCENIC HILL USER GROUP
HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS, GRIFFITH ON
MONDAY, 4 MARCH 2024 COMMENCING AT 5:30 PM**

PRESENT

Councillor Jenny Ellis (Chair), Ronald Anson (Community Representative), Matthew Hockings (Community Representative), Helen Vowles (Community Representative), David Heffer (Community Representative), Denis Couch (Community Representative), Matthew Pasin (Community Representative), Sally Bamblett (ZOOM) (Community Representative), Karen Patten (Community Representative), Deb Longhurst (Community Representative), Desma Newman (GLALC Representative)

Quorum = 3

STAFF

Director Sustainable Development, Bruce Gibbs, Director Infrastructure & Operations, Phil King, Tourism Manager, Mirella Guidolin, Visitor Information Centre Coordinator, Vicki McRae, Minute Taker, Joanne Bollen

1 APOLOGIES

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Ronald Anson and Rodney Savage that apologies be received from Sharon Careri (Community Representative), Julie Groat (Community Representative) and Corporate Property Officer & Native Title Coordinator, Amanda Vardanega.

Absent: Councillor Christine Stead.

2 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Ronald Anson and Denis Couch that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 5 February 2024, having first been circulated amongst all members, be confirmed.

3 BUSINESS ARISING

Nil.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Pecuniary Interests

There were no pecuniary interests declared.

Significant Non-Pecuniary Interests

There were no significant non-pecuniary interests declared.

Less Than Significant Non-Pecuniary Interests

There were no significant non-pecuniary interests declared.

5 ITEMS OF BUSINESS

CL01 DESMA NEWMAN - GRIFFITH LOCAL ABORIGINAL LAND COUNCIL

Desma Newman addressed the Committee and advised what the Griffith Local Aboriginal Land Council (GLALC) has been working on and what plans it has for Scenic Hill.

Ms Newman informed the Committee that GLALC currently has 8 or 9 land claims over Scenic Hill.

Ms Newman read the following definition of a Land Claim to the Committee:

“The *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983 (ALRA)* was introduced to compensate Aboriginal people in NSW for dispossession of their land.

The *ALRA* enables Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCS) to claim Crown Land, that is, land in NSW that is owned and managed by the State Government. LALCs can have land transferred to them in freehold title if at the time of the claim the land is, among other requirements:

- Able to be lawfully sold or leased
- Not lawfully used or occupied
- Not needed nor likely to be needed as residential lands
- Not needed nor likely to be needed for an essential public purpose including nature conservation
- Not impacted by native title (registration application or determination).

The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs has no role or power to determine Aboriginal Land claims in NSW. The role of determining land claims resides with the Minister administering the Crown Lands Management Act 2016, currently the Minister for Water, Property and Housing, and for claims made in the Greater Sydney region the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces.

Successful claims result in the transfer of land in freehold title to the claimant LALC.

LALCs can develop and/or sell land based on the decision of their members and with the approval of NSWALC. However, land acquired under the NSW land claims process after 1994 is subject to Native Title and the *Commonwealth Native Title Act 1993*.

LALC land acquired under the land claims process is held in freehold title and is subject to all prevailing planning, environmental management, and cultural heritage legislation.”

Ms Newman advised that the GLALC’s aims for Scenic Hill include:

- Preserving land for cultural heritage
- Indigenous tourism
- Cultural gathering place
- Yarning circle.

Any works that the GLALC would intend on undertaking would have to be funded by grants.

The Committee agreed to invite CEO of the GLALC to the next meeting of the Scenic Hill User Group so he can provide some further information.

CL02 UPDATE ON CURRENT LEVELS OF SERVICE / RESOURCING ON SCENIC HILL.

Director Infrastructure & Operations, Phil King addressed the Committee regarding resourcing for Scenic Hill. He advised that there is a budget allocation of \$6,000 per year which equates to roughly 2 hours per week.

Members of the community subject to Corrections Order also help clean up Scenic Hill as part of their community service.

CL03 UPDATE ON VISITOR FEEDBACK.

Tourism Manager, Mirella Guidolin spoke to the Committee about feedback they get from visitors to Griffith about Hermit's Cave and the lookout.

She advised the Committee that Scenic Hill, the Scenic Lookout and Hermits Cave are one of Griffith's main tourist attractions and the state of it lets Griffith down.

Ms Guidolin advised that due to the overgrown flora, rubbish, vandalism and lack of signage that the majority of feedback they are receiving is negative.

Ms Guidolin noted that accessibility is also an issue.

6 GENERAL BUSINESS

6.1 Hazard Reduction Burning

Helen Vowles enquired about hazard reduction burns on Scenic Hill. Mr King advised that Council puts in an application to the Rural Fire Service to engage them for hazard reduction burning.

SMT Comment:

RFS advised hazard reduction burns to take place the first week of April on some parts of Scenic Hill.

6.2 "Wish List" from Committee Members

Councillor Ellis asked Committee members to come up with a "wish list" of works and ideas that they wish to be involved in. The Committee will review them at the next meeting.

7 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Scenic Hill User Group is to be held on Monday, 6 May 2024 at 5:30pm.

There being no further business the meeting terminated at 6:50pm.