

Review of Councillor Representation on Capricorn Pest Management Group

Responsible Officer: General Manager Finance Governance and Risk

Council Meeting Date: 21 January 2020

File Ref: CM7.1

G/20/4057 Council Resolution:

*Moved Cr Masters
Seconded Cr Hansen*

That Council continue with Councillor representatives as the appointed voting members on the Capricorn Pest Management Group, noting that Crs Masters and Goodluck are Council's current representatives.

CARRIED

Purpose:

This report presents information to assist Council in determining representation on the Capricorn Pest Management Group.

Officer's Recommendation:

That Council determine its position on representation on the Capricorn Pest Management Group.

Background:

Established in 1999 the Capricorn Pest Management Group (CPMG) is a not-for-profit association. Its purpose is to deliver a coordinated approach to pest management in the Central Queensland Region. Refer to attachment 1 for more general information on the group. The membership provisions contained in the Group's constitution is shown below. CPMG advise that they are currently undertaking a review of the constitution.

"Classes of Members

5.(1) The membership of the association shall consist of the following classes:

- (a) 'Ordinary' members which are organisations established under legislation eg. Local government. Each ordinary member has two votes.*
- (b) 'Corporate' members which are corporations or other bodies corporate or incorporated associations or companies limited by guarantee. Each corporate member has only one vote.*
- (c) 'Associate' members which are natural persons who wish to join. Each associate member has no right to vote but is able to receive information (eg. Newsletter, financials, minutes, etc) and may participate in the meetings / workshops / activities of CPMG.*

- (d) 'Honorary' members which are natural persons which are appointed as honorary members by the voting members in a general meeting from time to time. Each honorary member has no right to vote.
- (e) 'Partner' members are incorporated associations, not for profit, companies limited by guarantee, corporations or other body corporates or organisation established under a legislation, subject to acceptance by the Management Committee. Each partner member only has one vote. No membership fee is payable by 'partner members', however partner members must, through funding or in-kind support in each financial year, contribute to CPMG no less than the 'Partner Fee' which is set by the Management Committee and reviewed at each AGM. Local Governments are ineligible to become 'Partner Members'.

5.(2) There is no limit to the number of members in each class."

Current membership of the Group is shown below:

ORGANISATION	MEMBERSHIP TYPE	REPRESENTATIVE
Banana Shire Council	Ordinary	Cr Pat Brennan
Banana Shire Council	Ordinary	Cr Colin Semple (Secretary)
Gladstone Regional Council	Ordinary	Cr Peter Masters (Vice President)
Gladstone Regional Council	Ordinary	Cr Kahn Goodluck
Gladstone Regional Council	Ordinary	Manager Biosecurity and Environmental Health (non-voting)
Gladstone Area Water Board	Ordinary	Land Manager (President)
Gladstone Area Water Board	Ordinary	Environmental Scientist
Rockhampton Regional Council	Ordinary	Cr Ellen Smith (Treasurer)
Rockhampton Regional Council	Ordinary	Cr Neil Fisher
Rockhampton Regional Council	Ordinary	Coordinator Health & Environment (non-voting)
Fitzroy Basin Association (FBA)	Corporate	Engagement Manager
-	Honorary	Nine Community Members

Options, Risk and Opportunity Analysis:

Option 1 – Continue with Councillor representatives on CPMG

The constitution provides that Council as an 'ordinary' member has the right to two voting positions on the Group. Currently the two voting positions on CPMG are Councillor representatives. Should Council wish to continue with Councillor representatives as the voting members, the required resolution would be:

"That Council continue with Councillor representatives as the appointed voting members on the Capricorn Pest Management Group, noting that Crs Masters and Goodluck are Council's current representatives."

Option 2 - Continue to participate in the CPMG with Councillor and Officer representatives

Should Council wish to reduce the participation of elected members on the Group, it could elect to have a Councillor and Officer as voting members on the Group. To give this option effect, the required resolution would be:

“That Council:

- 1. Continue with a Councillor representative on the Capricorn Pest Management Group with Cr as a voting member; and*
- 2. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to appoint an Officer position as the second voting member on the Group.”*

Option 3 – Replace Councillor participation on CPMG with Officer representation

The risks of withdrawing Councillor participation on the Group is that elected members would lose the current opportunity of networking with peers and others in relation to pest management education, awareness, on-ground activities and funding within the broader Central Queensland region. Should Council no longer wish to have Councillor participation on the CPMG, the resolution required to give this option effect would be:

“That Council:

- 1. Withdraw Councillor participation on the Capricorn Pest Management Group; and*
- 2. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to appoint two Officer positions as Council’s voting members on the Group.”*

Communication and Consultation:

Information was sought from the Capricorn Pest Management Group in relation to its constitution and current membership which is provided in the background section of the report.

Council’s Manager Biosecurity and Environmental Health was consulted in relation to what the perceived advantages and disadvantages of participation in the Group are from an Officer perspective. Feedback included:

- CPMG has in the last 12 months become more proactive and forward thinking.
- Funding is used for CQ pest control activities and research that assists our landholders
- The Group facilitates landholder education and awareness days and sources sponsors/funding for these types of activities
- The Group provides an opportunity to build relationships with adjoining Councils and other agencies such as the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and Gladstone Area Water Board
- The Group is also a forum to bring together on ground workers for coordinated activities and to share information and keep each other informed on emerging issues
- Recent activities of the group have involved trials on the control of pest plants and research into feral pigs to better inform control measures; facilitating the sharing/exchange of pest biological control agents between localities; shared use of the information trailer for field days and events; and the referral of landholders for advice on funding through organisations such as the Fitzroy Basin Association
- Officers consider it important to continue involvement in the group for not only the practical benefits outlined above, but to also ensure that pest management continues to gain momentum as an important component of biosecurity
- Whilst Officer participation at meetings/activities and the annual membership fee are a cost to Council, Officers consider that the benefits of participation far outweigh the current costs.

Crs Masters and Goodluck as the current Councillor representatives were also asked for feedback in relation to participation on the Group. The comments are provided below:

Benefits:

- The interaction and networking CPMG offers between Council officers and elected members is vital in ensuring that each individual Council understands each other's problems and is adequately resourced to tackle the issues
- The Councils involved share many common declared weed and animal problems and would never win the fight if Council efforts were only concentrated within Gladstone Regional Council boundaries
- The sharing of information and resources plays a critical role in developing and implementing strategies to tackle these issues from a wholistic viewpoint.

Recent Projects and Initiatives:

- CPMG organised and paid for Dr Wayne Vogler Senior Weed Scientist, Biosecurity Queensland to conduct an information evening at the Calliope CWA Hall which was attended by approximately fifty (50) landholders from throughout our region. The Group was also able to organise and facilitate Dr Vogler to be a guest speaker at the 2019 Beef Week Expo held in Rockhampton. Both sessions conducted by Dr Vogler were very well patronised and very nearly reached full capacity.
- CPMG also had a site for the full duration of 2019 Beef Week Expo where the Group was able to interact with many landholders from the Gladstone Region.
- CPMG is also a major sponsor of the annual Central Queensland King and Queen Big Boar Competition which provides an ideal opportunity to work closely with landholders and hunters to provide and seek the latest information regarding wild pig and dog populations. CPMG has partnered with Central Queensland University who are provided with controlled samples of the pigs' liver and heart which allows for vital research to obtain a better understanding of Leptospira Interrogans in our region.
- Trials and research are not limited to wild animals with several other trials on declared weeds currently underway. This includes some exciting work currently being undertaken in finding non-chemical ways of treating African Love grass and Giant Rats Tail. The relationship with Fitzroy Basin Association has seen the Group apply for grants which will enable CPMG to further undertake this and other vital research and trials into the future.
- CPMG also has a well-equipped display trailer that is well stocked with information and travels around events throughout Central Queensland. Ecofest and the Mt Larcom show are just a couple of events where the trailer is used locally.

Other Comments:

- By maintaining a strong and proactive organisation like CPMG in Central Queensland it helps foster strong and trustworthy relationships with our landholders and producers right across the region. The ability for elected members to sit down for strategic discussions with senior personnel from neighbouring Councils, Department Agriculture and Fisheries, Gladstone Area Water Board, Fitzroy Basin Association and other organisations like Ergon and Department of Transport and Main Roads as required is invaluable when it comes to developing and implementing these very important strategies.

Legal Strategy and Policy Implications:

Council is not legislatively required to be a member of the Capricorn Pest Management Group.

Financial and Resource Implications:

The CPMG constitution requires that the Group meet, at a minimum, three times per annum. The 2020 meeting schedule is as follows:

- 13 February 2020 hosted by Gladstone Area Water Board
- 14 May 2020 hosted by Banana Shire Council
- 13 August 2020 hosted by Rockhampton Regional Council
- 1 October 2020 AGM hosted by Gladstone Regional Council
- 12 November 2020 hosted by FBA Flow Centre.

There is a resource cost to Council in having elected members and Officers attend meetings and other commitments organised by the Group. These costs are absorbed within operational budgets.

Summary:

Not applicable.

Anticipated Resolution Completion Date:

29 February 2020.

Attachments:

1. Extract from CPMQ website containing public facing information on the Group

Tabled Items:

Nil.

Report Prepared by: Governance Advisor