



Down's Estate Community Working Group (DECWG)

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Forum: www.seafordcc.org/forum

Proposal for the next 12 months on the Down's Estate, Seaford

A collaboration of DECWG and FCC to determine Community Amalgamated Use on site

As at January, 2016

Stage 1 3 month Feasibility Phase (from March 2016)

At the end of Stage 1, a clear decision will be made on the future of the buildings on the site

Stage 2 9 month Implementation Phase (from June 2016)

Stage 2 will proceed if the DECWG proposal for the site is supported in Stage 1

Timeframe:

	2016	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
Stage 1 Feasibility													
Stage 2 Implementation													

Stage 1: Feasibility Phase – 3 months

- Goals:**
- To support a collaborative process between DECWG and Frankston City Council (FCC) to consider the viability of incorporating the DECWG's vision into the Down's Estate Master Plan and produce a report for Councillors' consideration
 - Improve protection and asset management of the buildings on the site

- Activities:**
- Establish a Steering Committee of FCC staff, interested Councillors, DECWG members and other relevant stakeholders to undertake this review task
 - Protect the site with fencing, clean it up and install signage
 - Engage community volunteers in suitable approved activities
 - Seek funding sources

- Outcomes:**
- A clear decision on the viability of the DECWG proposal for Down's Estate and the use of the buildings on the site
 - A report outlining how Community Amalgamated Use can be included in the Down's Estate Master Plan
 - Improved protection of the site's assets

Budget

As listed in the accompanying Budget, if volunteer contributions are used, DECWG estimates the cost of Stage 1 of this proposal to be around \$9,850.

Proposal concept

The DECWG believes that consideration of the DECWG Proposal can be completed in three months if an active collaborative process is established. If it is commenced promptly, it could be finished by the end of May.

There are effectively three options for the buildings on Down's Estate:

- demolish and have minimal resources on site for very limited or no ongoing community involvement
- demolish and erect purpose-built facilities for a mixed use community program (cost and timeframe to be identified)
- retain the buildings and use them for a low budget start-up of a mixed use community program, as proposed by DECWG

If Stage 1 supports the DECWG proposal, Stage 2 (with an estimated budget of around \$70,600) will focus on renovating:

- the site - to commence community programs, and
- the house - to basic standards for a caretaker residence

Stage 2: Implementation Phase – 9 months

- Goals:**
- Finalize the Revised Master Plan and commence implementation for Community Amalgamated Use at Down's Estate
 - Renovate the house and shed and any other structures designated to remain on site
 - Broaden community involvement

- Activities:**
- Maintenance works to shed and site to provide basic needs for public use
 - Renovate house for basic accommodation for a caretaker
 - Apply for grants and seek funding sources
 - Commence Community Programs

Frankston Environmental Friends Network

DECWG has been a member of the Frankston Environmental Friends Network (FEFN) since December 2014 in preparation for working as a volunteer group at the Down's Estate site. We have participated in monthly FEFN meetings and acquainted ourselves with the operational guidelines in the FEFN Volunteer Manual. As a member of FEFN, we would receive insurance cover while working on FCC properties, once approval is obtained to perform agreed tasks and we are listed as one of the groups covered.

Community contribution

There is substantial goodwill toward the DECWG proposal from a broad range of individuals, community groups, schools, institutions and businesses from around the municipal area. Support includes offers of volunteer contribution from a diversity of trades and professional sectors, for tasks such as:

- undertaking building and site renovation tasks
- drafting landscape plans and Natural Resource Management strategies
- establishing educational activities for schools, colleges, community and indigenous programs
- pursuing fund-raising and grant-seeking opportunities

These offers could make budget savings as well as enhance community engagement with the project. The DECWG will endeavour to obtain pledges of funds for various elements of the project. We recently received our first pledge of \$5000 for materials for food education for children.

We understand that all planned work tasks are subject to further discussion and agreement between DECWG and FCC to review insurance and volunteer guidelines to develop agreed work plans and safe work management practices.

Work on the buildings will be undertaken and overseen by qualified tradesmen and builders and where required, will be undertaken in line with FCC's Procurement Policy.

Community groups collaborating to develop a visionary proposal for the land previously owned by Harry Down

Discussion

We see Down's Estate as a unique opportunity for the Frankston City Council and an amalgamation of local residents groups, businesses, organisations and other interested people to collaborate and build on the existing Down's Estate Indigenous and white settler history.

It can facilitate community awareness raising, education and management of the Down's Estate and adjacent Seaford Wetlands environments and provide community-strengthening opportunities, based on social inclusion, positive activities and skill building in sustainable lifestyle practices.

This project has the potential to create many worthwhile benefits for a diverse range of community members while at the same time helping to manage and care for the environment.

Retention and restoration of the main buildings will serve two main purposes. They will provide valuable shelter for community use and caretaker accommodation, as well as a visual reminder of the history of the farm.

Lifting the profile of the Down's Estate and encouraging community engagement would further contribute to Frankston's reputation for being innovative and build on its Sustainable City of 2015 status.

We are hopeful that collaboratively, we can overcome any obstacles standing in the way of a Community Amalgamated Project being established at Down's Estate in 2016.