

Executive Summary**12.2 Down's Estate - Utilisation Options**

Enquiries: (Michael Papageorgiou: Community Development)

Council Plan

Community Outcome:	3. Sustainable City
Strategy:	3.2 Build a local community culture of good stewardship of the environment
Priority Action	3.2.2 Protect and maintain key natural assets (e.g. parks and reserves) owned by Council

Purpose

To brief Council on options for future utilisation and management of Down's Estate and seek a decision on the utilisation of the site.

Recommendation (Director Community Development)

That Council resolves to support Option 3 for a Stage 1 Feasibility Project as listed below for the utilisation of the Down's Estate:

- A. Clean-up and maintain the site to a minimum standard, including fencing, that ensures a minimal risk to the public and liability for Council (\$44,000)
- B. Continue Spiny Rush control program and undertake additional environmental management requirements for the site as needed (\$7,000)
- C. Demolish the buildings (\$20,000)
- D. Support the DECWG proposal to establish a Steering Committee, refine the Master Plan with suitable community uses without the requirement for buildings (\$6,000)
- E. Allow volunteers on-site to undertake approved activities. *(Council requires all volunteers undertaking activities on Council's reserves to comply with a Code of Practice and to have an "Agreed Works Plan" in place. An example plan is attached for information purposes)*
- F. Bring the revised Master Plan Report back to Council in June 2016.

Key Points / Issues

- Councillors were briefed on the background and options for management of Down's Estate on 12th October 2015.
- At that briefing it was noted that a decision is required on the future management of the site. Any use of the site with the existing buildings retained would require their renovation to current building and DDA standards plus ongoing maintenance.
- A Master Plan for the site was developed in 2013 which presented a range of options for the appropriate future use and development of the land to complement the conservation values of the surrounding area. As yet, a formal decision on the use of the site has not been made.
- Considerable community interest was generated during the Master Plan consultation process. Subsequently, the Down's Estate Community Working Group (DECWG) was formed and Council has been in discussion with them regarding the potential use of the site for community-based activities.

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- Following consultation with Councillors and Council Officers, DECWG have prepared a proposal for Council's consideration (Attachment A) and an initial 12-month Budget (Attachment B).
- This proposal has a 2-staged approach: it starts with a '3 month feasibility' stage that will support a collaborative process between Frankston City Council and DECWG, through the establishment of a Steering Committee, to consider the viability of DECWG's vision, including the use of the buildings and improved protection of the site's assets.
- This will require a range of staff from across Council at an approximate cost of \$6,000 in officer time. In addition, a focus on this project will require reprioritisation of existing projects and expectations.
- A Council decision will be sought following Stage 1 to determine whether progression to Stage 2 is warranted. Dependent on this decision, Stage 2 will focus on finalising the Master Plan and commencing suitable community programs.
- DEWCG are currently seeking support to progress Stage 1.
- The objectives of Stage 1 of the DECWG proposal are supported in-principle at officer level. However, in making a decision on the future utilisation of the site, Council will need to consider the following matters:
 - a) Works will need to be undertaken on site, prior to allowing volunteers on the site to ensure the site is safe and minimise Council's liability;
 - b) The site is isolated insofar as there is no passive surveillance and currently has no power, water or sewerage connected;
 - c) Delaying a decision on the retention or removal of the buildings may leave the structures open to further vandalism and damage;
 - d) In order to secure the buildings adequately, temporary construction type fencing will need to be erected in the form of 1.8M cyclone wire fencing with concrete footings; this would need to be hired. There has not been provision for this in the DECWG budget proposal;
 - e) A steering committee will need to include officers from across Council departments. These include Planning & Environment, Facilities, Public Space & Leisure, Community Safety, Operations, Commercial Services and Community Strengthening. Melbourne Water and DELWP should also be invited.
 - f) The proposal to have a caretaker living on at the site does not align with Council policy or practice. It may also be in conflict with the zoning of the land.
- There are considerable advantages in volunteers undertaking a range of beneficial works on site including the cost savings to Council as well as the social and community benefits provided by such community-based projects. It will be important to ensure that any tasks performed by volunteers are approved and aligned with Council's Volunteer Manual, risk management and procurement policies.
- Volunteer work on the buildings, if these are to be retained, would be limited, as their renovation would have to meet current building and DDA standards: therefore qualified tradespeople that meet Council's procurement policy would need to be engaged for the bulk of the work.

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- Given the site's isolation, current lack of services and the poor condition of the buildings, Council will need to give careful consideration to the risks and its duty of care to community members.
- The cost of renovation of both buildings has been costed at \$371,000 plus annual maintenance costs of \$25,000. In addition, restoration of the buildings and long term community use of the site would require the connection of electricity, water and sewerage. Funds will need to be allocated for this to occur.
- Council will also need to consider the potential advantages of having community involvement in the site.
- At the October 12th Briefing, Councillors requested information on what elements of the Master Plan and the Working Group's proposal could be undertaken at the site irrespective of whether the buildings were retained.
- Future uses and works compatible with the Master Plan and the Working Group's aspirations (that do not rely on the buildings being kept) include: Clean-up of the site; visitor car parking provision; weed control; fencing of the wetland area; establishment of an indigenous bush-food garden; establishment of a permaculture site; revegetation of wetland species; establishment of a wetland walk; linking the existing bike path with the Seaford Wetlands walk with a boardwalk across the drainage line and construction of a viewing platform.
- The Down's Estate Master Plan provides a range of options, some of which could be implemented as funding becomes available. It provides a template for the selection of appropriate activities and infrastructure for the site that could be progressed over a number of years dependant on available funding and need and do not rely on the presence of the buildings.
- Community involvement at the site is not contingent on the buildings being retained, although the Working Group has a strong desire to retain the buildings. Should Council decide to remove the structures, community use of the site could still occur but the site's safety and security would not be dependent on the Community group's attendance or long term viability.
- Council also has a role in maintaining the site as an environmental buffer to the wetlands and to manage the site to enhance its environmental and habitat values.
- The most immediate environmental issue on the site is a large patch of the noxious weed *Juncus acutus* (Spiny Rush) occurring on the western side of the site which is gradually spreading and has potential to spread to the Seaford Wetlands.
- Council has undertaken control programs for Spiny Rush within Down's Estate and has applied for further funding from Melbourne Water and Green Army to continue the control program.

The following options have been prepared for Council consideration of a possible Stage 1 of DECWG's proposal for the management of Down's Estate, including the initial financial implications. Note Option 2 includes estimated costs of renovation of the buildings if decision is made to retain them at Stage 1.

Option 1 (\$57,000)

- A. Clean-up and maintain the site to a minimum standard, including fencing, that ensures a minimal risk to the public and liability for Council (\$44,000)
- B. Continue Spiny Rush control program and undertake additional environmental management requirements for the site as needed (\$7,000)

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- C. Support the DECWG proposal to establish a Steering Committee to assess the feasibility of the proposal and refine the Master Plan (\$6,000)
- D. Allow volunteers on-site to undertake approved activities
- E. **Defer a decision on the buildings until completion of Stage 1 of DECWG proposal**
- F. Bring the revised Master Plan Report back to Council in June 2016

Option 2 (\$453,000)

- A. Clean-up and maintain the site to a minimum standard, including fencing, that ensures a minimal risk to the public and liability for Council (\$44,000)
- B. Continue Spiny Rush control program and undertake additional environmental management requirements for the site as needed (\$7,000)
- C. **Retain and renovate the buildings (Stage 2 costs estimated at \$371,000 plus \$25,000 annual maintenance cost)**
- D. Support the DECWG proposal to establish a Steering Committee to assess the feasibility of the proposal and refine the Master Plan (\$6,000)
- E. Allow volunteers on-site to undertake approved activities
- F. Bring the revised Master Plan Report back to Council in June 2016

Option 3 (\$77,000) (recommended)

- A. Clean-up and maintain the site to a minimum standard, including fencing, that ensures a minimal risk to the public and liability for Council (\$44,000)
- B. Continue Spiny Rush control program and undertake additional environmental management requirements for the site as needed (\$7,000)
- C. **Demolish the buildings (\$20,000)**
- D. Support the DECWG proposal to establish a Steering Committee, refine the Master Plan with suitable community uses without the requirement for buildings (\$6,000)
- E. Allow volunteers on-site to undertake approved activities
- F. Bring the revised Master Plan Report back to Council in June 2016

Option 4 (\$71,000)

- A. Clean-up and maintain the site to a minimum standard, including fencing, that ensures a minimal risk to the public and liability for Council (\$44,000)
- B. Continue Spiny Rush control program and undertake additional environmental management requirements for the site as needed (\$7,000)
- C. **Demolish the buildings (\$20,000)**
- D. **Advise DECWG that there are currently no opportunities for community activities at Down's Estate.**

12.2 Down's Estate - Utilisation Options**Executive Summary****Financial Impact**

It is noted that the State Government has introduced legislation that prevents Councils from raising rates above inflation levels from 1 July 2016. Victorian council's will be forced to cap rates at the consumer price index (CPI) which has been declared for 2016/17 at 2.50 per cent. The CPI (based on a basket of common household goods and services that Council purchases very little of) is a very poor index of the cost of providing Council services that is very heavily based on labour costs.

The financial gap between the previous editions of Council's Long Term Financial Plan and the revised plan in terms of rate revenue over the next four year period is approximately \$28 million; this increases to \$43 million over a five year period. This reduction will have a severe impact on Council's ability to maintain services, deliver key initiatives and improvements and maintain adequate levels of capital expenditure.

It is also noted that in 2015/2016, Council's debt will peak at \$37.2 million. While this debt has been used to deliver key community assets such as the Peninsula Aquatic Recreation Centre (PARC), Frankston Yacht Club and the Frankston Regional Resource and Recycling Centre (FRRRC), the cost of servicing this debt in a rate capping environment will severely limit Council's ability to provide further improved facilities and services.

Initial costs for the four options available (*all relate to a Stage 1 project only*) range from \$57,000 - \$453,000. This includes labour costs of staff estimated at \$6,000, however, prioritising this work will also have an impact on currently scheduled priorities. Should Option 1, 2 or 3 be adopted the reprioritisation of labour will have a negative impact on the implementation of the Environmental Strategy.

Option 2 includes the estimated cost of renovating the buildings to current building and DDA standards, should the buildings be retained, and the DECWG's proposal progress to a Stage 2. Renovation of both buildings has been costed at \$371,000 plus annual maintenance costs of \$25,000 (*refer to Attachment C for Condition Report and Attachment D for costing of renovation of the house*). In addition, restoration of the buildings and long term community use of the site would require the connection of electricity, water and sewerage. Funds will have to be allocated for this to be achieved.

It should be noted that, if the buildings are removed, it may later be determined in the revision of the Master Plan that a new building is needed and this would incur additional cost yet to be determined.

Implementation of additional actions from the Master Plan (in Stage 2 and beyond) could be undertaken as funding becomes available. (*Note that Stage 2 could extend over many years and could require funding that totals several million dollars, especially if new buildings are required.*)

Currently there are no funds allocated for maintenance works at this site. However, Council has applied for external funding to control Spiny Rush in 2015/16 from Melbourne Water and the Federal Green Army program. Some Spiny Rush control has already been undertaken through grants obtained through these programs this year.

12.2 Down's Estate - Utilisation Options**Executive Summary****Consultation****1. External Stakeholders**

Council officers have met with the Working Group on a number of occasions to discuss their submission for the active use of the Down's Estate property. Members of the Working Group have met with Councillor Aitken and officers to inspect the property and the buildings. Birdlife Victoria has been in contact with officers regarding the Ramsar convention status of the Seaford Wetlands and the values of the adjoining Down's Estate. Melbourne Water has also been involved in discussions about the site and potential future uses.

2. Other Stakeholders

The Council Departments consulted to date are: Planning and Environment, Facilities, Building Services, Public Space and Leisure, Community Safety, Operations (Arborist and Foreshore and Natural Reserves), Commercial Services (Property Strategy & Portfolio).

Analysis (Environmental / Economic / Social Implications)

Regardless of community activities, management of the site will be required to protect its environmental values. In particular, controlling the high threat of the weed Spiny Rush is required as it has potential to spread into the Seaford Wetlands. Council has an obligation to control Spiny Rush under the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994. It would be very expensive to control if allowed to spread, however, Council has undertaken some Spiny Rush control at the site and has applied for funding from Melbourne Water and Green Army for further control works.

Legal / Policy / Council Plan ImpactCharter of Human Rights and Responsibilities

The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities has been considered in the preparation of this report but is not relevant to the content of the report.

Legal

There are potential legal implications for Council relating to the safety and security of the buildings and infrastructure on site. Council has an obligation to Control Spiny Rush under the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994.

Policy Impacts

Council's Draft Open Space Strategy is relevant to this proposal and use of the land. Down's Estate is classified as regional conservation space. The draft strategy says it can be used for unstructured recreation, trail and biodiversity connections and environmental education purposes

Officer's Declaration of Interests

Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.

Risk Mitigation

The site is relatively isolated and subject to inappropriate activity and vandalism.

The disused buildings on site present an immediate public safety risk due to their dilapidated state and the ease with which they can be accessed.

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Works are required to either demolish the buildings or maintain the surrounds or to activate the buildings and the site ensuring they are made safe and secure.

All options will incur costs for maintenance of the site and control of high threat weeds. All options would also require officer time to liaise and support the Working Group to develop its program.

A soil testing report (see Attachment E) initially undertaken for the production of the master plan, has underlined the difficulties presented by high soil salinity and acid sulphate soils restricting excavation and disturbance. It is recommended that further investigations are undertaken to confirm the soil conditions in the vicinity of the buildings as there were 2 samples analysed from that area. This will assist in directing the actions and activities possible for the working group in that vicinity.

There are no utilities (power, water, sewer – septic system is defunct) connected to the property. Ongoing community use of the site would require negotiation with the adjacent Motorcycle Park for access to toilet facilities in the short term and connection of sewerage in the long term.

Conclusion

A decision is required on the future management of Down's Estate. The DECWG is seeking Council support to progress Stage 1 of its proposal.

In making its decision on the future utilisation of the site, Council will need to consider the risks posed by the buildings in their current poor state of repair, as well as potential advantages of having community involvement in the site. It will also need to consider whether the site is appropriate for community activities due to its isolation (and lack of security) and lack of services. Any potential risks will fall to Council should the proposed community activity fail to be sustainable.

Down's Estate has been unutilised for a period of time and the Working Group's proposal, which has been refined in consultation with Council officers, presents an opportunity for the site to be managed and improved.

Four options (all variations of a Stage 1 project) are available for Council consideration which include either retention or removal of the buildings. While consideration has been given to retention of the buildings with a view to their future refurbishment and utilisation, there are a number of significant factors that mitigate against their retention.

Community involvement at the site is not contingent on the buildings being retained, although the Working Group has a strong desire to retain the buildings. Should Council decide to remove the structures, community use of the site could still occur but the site's safety and security would not be dependent on the group's attendance or long term viability.

Appropriate additional initiatives and improvements for the property, based on the Down's Estate Master Plan could be implemented over time as funding becomes available.

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ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A: DECWG Proposal January 2016
- Attachment B: DECWG Proposal Budget January 2016
- Attachment C: Down's Estate - Conditions Report - July 2014
- Attachment D: QS Assessment for Downs estate
- Attachment E: Down's Estate - Land Capability and Potential - March 2015
- Attachment F: Agreed Works Plan Template
- Attachment G: Council Guidelines for Environmental Volunteers

12.2 Down's Estate - Utilisation Options
Officers' Assessment**Background**

Councillors were briefed on the status of Down's Estate and the Down's Estate Community Working Group October 12th 2015.

The site was purchased by Frankston City Council in 2006 for \$1.25M with the aim of protecting and enhancing the adjoining Seaford Wetlands. The property, although not included within the Ramsar site, provides additional habitat for local and migratory bird species.

The site consists of approximately 20.4 ha of former grazing land adjacent to the wetlands and an area of 0.6 ha surrounding a disused residence, shed and outbuildings. A shared walking/bicycle path was installed through the property as part of the development of Peninsula Link and provides an important bicycle link from Dandenong through Frankston to the southern Mornington Peninsula.

At the October 12th briefing it was noted that a decision is required on the future management of the site and any use of the site with the existing buildings retained would require their renovation to current building and DDA standards plus ongoing maintenance.

A Master Plan for the site was developed in 2013. The Master Plan makes recommendations for the appropriate future use and development of the land, ensuring that any uses and activities are suitable for the site and complement the conservation values of the immediate and surrounding area. This is particularly important given the ecological values present within the adjacent lands.

Environmental Values and Issues

Council has an on-going role in maintaining the site as an environmental buffer to the adjoining internationally significant wetlands, managing the site to enhance its environmental and habitat values and ensuring the wetlands are protected from degrading processes such as weed invasion. Council officers are consulting with Melbourne Water and a range of experts on the environmental management of the area outside the immediate surrounds of the buildings.

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) is looking for a test case, for altering/managing the boundary of a Ramsar site. Melbourne Water have indicated that one option for DELWP to consider is that Seaford Wetlands could be extended to include part of Down's Estate.

Melbourne Water has advised that a revision of the Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands Ramsar Management Plan is currently being prepared by ecological consultants. This revision will include an investigation of the Ramsar site boundary and potential inclusion of Down's Estate. It will also include management recommendations for this land.

Melbourne Water has also advised due to current works on the pipe that carries water to Seaford Wetlands, it will be possible to pump water through the natural drainage channel and depressions at Down's Estate into Seaford Wetlands. This would increase habitat provision through this area and be an opportunity to enhance the environmental values of the site at no cost to Council.

Melbourne Water's position on this site was also sought to gain an understanding of the perceived risks to the wetlands and their interest in the site. Melbourne Water have indicated they are unlikely to take over the site but are able to provide advice and assistance in the management of the site, given its role as a buffer to the Seaford Wetlands.

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Officers' Assessment

Council has also identified, through state-wide native vegetation modelling by DELWP, that the western portion of Down's Estate supports "specific offsets" for a threatened flora species, Grey Billy-buttons. "Specific offsets" may be required when a permit has been issued for the removal of native vegetation that has a significant impact on habitat for a specific rare or threatened species. As these offsets are often limited across the state, Council could potentially use these offsets if required for Council projects, and hence save money sourcing offsets externally, or on-sell the offsets to a third-party. Either way it could be a source of funding for environmental works on the site.

The south-western corner of Down's Estate is currently infested with the high threat weed *Juncus acutus* (Spiny Rush) which is gradually spreading and has potential to spread to the Seaford Wetlands. If allowed to spread, control of this weed would become very difficult and expensive. Council has undertaken control programs for Spiny Rush within Down's Estate and has applied for further funding from Melbourne Water and Green Army to continue the control program. Spiny Rush is listed as a noxious weed under the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994 and Council, as landowner, has a legal obligation under the Act to control it.

Current condition of the site and buildings

The house and shed are in very poor condition and under constant pressure from vandalism. There has been some recent media publicity regarding local residents' concern about the ongoing damage to the buildings and apparent lack of management of the site.

Reports prepared by the Municipal Building Surveyor (*Refer attachment C*), and an independent quantity surveyor (*Aquenta Consulting refer attachment D*) indicate that in order for the buildings to be retained they would need to be renovated to current building standards before being considered suitable for use. While the buildings remain in their current state they pose a risk to the public and a liability to Council. A decision to retain the buildings would need to be accompanied by an allocation of funding for their renovation.

The Aquenta Consulting assessment indicates the dwelling would require extensive renovation dictated by the current building standards, at an estimated cost of \$351,000 with contingency.

There are no utilities currently connected to the property and these would need to be connected to make the buildings usable. Currently power is connected to the Motorcycle Park buildings on the other side of Old Wells Road as well as toilets and water, indicating connection to Down's Estate is feasible.

Soil Testing

A review of the soil testing report (see attachment E) initially undertaken for the production of the Master Plan, has underlined the difficulties presented by high soil salinity and coastal acid sulphate soils restricting excavation and disturbance.

Security

Council's Community Safety Department has been consulted on the security aspects of the site and has undertaken a brief assessment of the site against CPTED principles (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design).

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Officers' Assessment

Security at the site is problematic as it is isolated and lacks a territorial boundary resulting in a perceived lack of ownership. Improving security of the site will require connection of electricity to light the site, improvement of fencing, demonstration of ownership through signage and fencing and installation of overt surveillance devices (security cameras). Currently the presence of the disused buildings continues to attract illegal use of the site.

A mobile camera had been on-site up until the end of 2015, however has since been removed as it was not capturing any evidence of criminal activity and there was no other suitable location for the camera.

Down's Estate Master Plan and the Down's Estate Community Working Group

As noted earlier, a Master Plan for the site was developed in 2013. Council resolved at the Ordinary Meeting on 18 November 2013 that two options in the Master Plan for the use of Down's Estate: 'picnic place' and 'amalgamated use' be placed on exhibition and that community consultation on these options take place.

The 'Amalgamated Use' option generally received more community support. However, to date, a formal decision on the use of the site has not been made.

Considerable community interest was generated during the Master Plan consultation process. Subsequently, the Down's Estate Community Working Group (DECWG) was formed and Council has been in dialogue with them regarding the potential use of the site for community-based activities.

DECWG have prepared a proposal for Council's consideration which is addressed later in this report.

Community Petition supporting development of Down's Estate

In response to concerns that the buildings on site would be demolished, DECWG tabled a petition at the Council Meeting held on Monday 16th November 2015.

The petition asked Council to:

- *defer the decision about Down's Estate,*
- *retain the main structures,*
- *allow DECWG onsite to help protect the site, improve its appearance and prevent vandalism*
- *develop a new masterplan in full collaboration with DECWG and the community*

A total of sixty (60) signatures to the petition were obtained.

After receiving this petition, Council decided to defer consideration of the Downs Estate Utilisation Report that was on the Council agenda for the 16th November Meeting. The other issues have been considered by Council Officers in the preparation of this report.

The petition demonstrates a level of support in the local community for retention and renovation of the buildings and Down's Estate and utilisation of part of the site for community activities. However, it should be noted that the number of signatures collected is modest. This may be a reflection of the limited time available to gather support but may also reflect that interest in the site may be limited to certain sectors of the local community.

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Officers' Assessment

In framing its response to the petition and the broader objectives for Down's Estate, Council will need to consider the risks posed by the buildings in their current poor state of repair, as well as potential advantages of having community involvement in the site. It will also need to consider whether the site is appropriate for community activities due to its isolation (and lack of security) and lack of services. Any potential risks will fall to Council should any community activity fail to be sustainable.

Down's Estate has been unutilised for a period of time and DECWG proposal presents an opportunity for the site to be managed and improved.

Community involvement at the site is not contingent on the buildings being retained, although DECWG has a strong desire to retain the buildings. Should Council decide to remove the structures, community use of the site could still occur but the site's safety and security would not be dependent on the group's attendance or long term viability.

Down's Estate Community Working Group Proposal

DECWG has recently met with Councillors, Council officers and the State Member for Carrum, Sonya Kilkenny MP to seek assistance in developing its proposal to ensure that the objectives of Council and the community group are aligned.

At these meetings it was agreed that DECWG develop its proposal with assistance from Council officers and that a site meeting be organised with Councillors to discuss the opportunities offered by the site and what could be realistically achieved within budgetary and risk management constraints.

Following a meeting with Council officers in January 2016, DECWG has refined its Proposal and budget (*refer to Attachments A and B*). The proposal has a 2-staged approach by which a 3 month feasibility stage will support a collaborative process between Frankston City Council and DECWG, through the establishment of a Steering Committee, to consider the viability of DECWG's vision, including the use of the buildings and improved protection of the site's assets. The key actions of the proposal are:

Stage 1

- Establish a joint Steering Committee including relevant Council Departments and DECWG to develop a realistic, staged program for the site.
- Initiate a 3-month 'feasibility stage' during which the existing structures would not be demolished and additional security measures put in place. This stage would enable investigation by the Steering Committee of realistic options for retention and renovation of the buildings and other activities on site.
- Allow DECWG to undertake basic volunteer site maintenance activities subject to the relevant approvals under Council's normal process for engaging volunteers to undertake on-site works.

DECWG have estimated a budget requirement of \$9,850 for this stage.

Stage 2

A Council decision will be sought following stage 1 to determine progression to stage 2. Dependent on this decision, Stage 2 will focus on finalising the Master Plan and commencing suitable community programs.

DEWCG are currently seeking support to progress Stage 1.

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Officers' AssessmentCouncil Officer Response to Proposal

There are considerable benefits in volunteers undertaking a range of appropriate works on site including the cost savings to Council as well as the social and community benefits provided by such community-based projects. However, any tasks performed by volunteers would have to be approved and aligned with Council's Volunteer Manual, risk management and procurement policies.

Council officers support the objectives of Stage 1 of the DEWCG proposal in-principle. However, Council will need to consider:

- Works will need to be undertaken on site, prior to allowing volunteers on the site to ensure the site is safe and minimise Council's liability;
- The site is isolated insofar as there is no passive surveillance and currently has no power, water or sewerage connected;
- Delaying a decision on the buildings leaves the structures open to further vandalism and damage;
- In order to secure the buildings adequately, temporary construction type fencing may need to be erected in the form of 1.8M cyclone wire fencing with concrete footings, which would need to be hired. There has not been provision made for this in the DEWCG budget proposal;
- A steering committee will need to include officers from across Council departments. These include Planning & Environment, Facilities, Public Space & Leisure, Community Safety, Operations, Commercial Services and Community Strengthening. Melbourne Water and DELWP should also be invited;
- Supporting Stage 1 of the proposal will require a range of staff from across Council at an approximate cost of \$6,000 in officer time. In addition, a focus on this project will require reprioritisation of existing projects and expectations;
- The proposal to have a caretaker living on at the site is not in line with Council policy or practice and may be in conflict with the zoning of the land.

Comparison with other community environment and agriculture sites

At the October 12th briefing, Councillors requested information on the potential of Down's Estate to be developed based on the CERES Community Environment Park model, located in Brunswick East.

More recently, DEWCG have explained that their proposal for the site was not directly based on the CERES model. The potential for extensive programs similar to those run at CERES is significantly limited at Down's Estate. However, the site could incorporate various elements of a number of similar community environment and food growing projects.

Collaboration and involvement with local schools

DEWCG have built relationships with the 3 local schools in the Seaford area, Patterson River Secondary College, Seaford North Primary and Seaford Primary. The schools have formed part of the working group and are keen to participate in training courses at Down's Estate including running VET courses.

12.2 Down's Estate - Utilisation Options
Officers' Assessment**Issues and Discussion**

A review of the soil test report undertaken for the site indicates that uses will be restricted by high soil salinity, the presence of coastal acid sulphate soils, the need to provide environmental management plans for any excavation works, and a requirement to 'build-over' the existing soils by soil importation to avoid soil disturbance and the salinity. This will add to any development cost.

In addition to poor soil health, the need to protect Seaford Wetlands' environmental values significantly constrains the potential for community agricultural activities. Isolation and lack of utility services also severely limits other community uses.

Given these factors and the poor condition of the buildings, Council will need to consider whether the site is appropriate for the proposed community activities and whether a community group can provide sufficient presence to reduce anti-social behaviour at the site.

Council's Commercial Services Department acts as the Public Land Manager for Council-owned and Crown land within the municipality. Commercial Services has been consulted on the potential future uses of the land including the option of allowing DECWG to initiate activities on site.

The Commercial Services Department has noted that there are significant difficulties in undertaking community activities at the site and expressed concern that the DECWG proposal may lack the economic rigour to be a viable option. Therefore it is important for Council to explore a range of alternative opportunities for the site, beyond community-based activities and recognise that the restriction contained in the Contract of Sale in respect of development of the land, expires on 31st December 2021".

Consideration of potential uses of the site

Following the October 12th briefing, Council Officers met with DECWG representatives who indicated the group would be willing to continue to work with Council to develop options for the site if the buildings were removed.

DECWG indicated that its aim was to achieve a balance between community engagement and sound environmental management of the site.

The Down's Estate Master Plan provides a range of options, some of which could be implemented as funding becomes available. It provides a template for selection of appropriate activities and infrastructure for the site that could be progressed over a number of years dependent on available funding and need and do not rely on the presence of the buildings.

The eventual options chosen could incorporate elements of the 'picnic place' and 'amalgamated use' options from the Master Plan and additional uses proposed by DEWCG.

Uses and works compatible with the Master Plan include the following.

Works not requiring connection of power and water:

- Clean-up of the site;
- weed control;
- establishing car parking;
- fencing of the wetland area;
- establishment of a wetland walk;
- revegetation of wetland species;

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Officers' Assessment

- linking the existing bike path with the Seaford Wetlands walk with a boardwalk across the drainage line
- and construction of a viewing platform

Community related uses not requiring the buildings:

- establishment of an indigenous bush-food garden
- establishment of a permaculture site;
- interpretive signage including an indigenous cultural trail;
- community planting and weeding days.

A gradual staged implementation of some of the above works and projects would ensure that any risks to Council are controlled and that activities take place as the potential and limitations of the site become evident over a period of time.

Options Available including Financial Implications

In making a decision on the future utilisation of Down's Estate, Councillors should consider the following:

- The need to protect the environmental values of the area,
- The need to ensure the site is safe and minimise Council's liability;
- Future costs associated with the site and rate capping and the need to keep management activities within reasonable resourcing parameters
- The potential risks and benefits for compatible and complementary community access;

While consideration has been given to retention of the buildings with a view to their future refurbishment and utilisation, there are a number of significant factors that mitigate against their retention including:

- Lack of utility services;
- isolation of the site and difficulty securing it;
- immediate public safety risk and liability presented by the existing structures;
- the on-going cost of maintenance of the buildings and continual repair of vandalism damage;
- the cost of extensive renovation required for the house and shed at an estimated cost of \$371,000 and an estimated annual building maintenance cost of \$25,000.

It should be noted that, if the buildings are removed, it may later be determined in the revision of the Master Plan that building(s) are needed which would incur additional cost yet to be determined.

Therefore, the options available for Council consideration for the management of Down's Estate, including initial financial implications are:

Option 1 (\$57,000)

- A. Clean-up and maintain the site to a minimum standard, including fencing, that ensures a minimal risk to the public and liability for Council (\$44,000)
- B. Continue Spiny Rush control program and undertake additional environmental management requirements for the site as needed (\$7,000)

12.2 Down's Estate - Utilisation Options
Officers' Assessment

- C. Support the DECWG proposal to establish a Steering Committee to assess the feasibility of the proposal and refine the Master Plan (\$6,000)
- D. Allow volunteers on-site to undertake approved activities
- E. **Defer a decision on the buildings until completion of Stage 1 of DECWG proposal**
- F. Bring the revised Master Plan Report back to Council in June 2016

Option 2 (\$453,000)

- A. Clean-up and maintain the site to a minimum standard, including fencing, that ensures a minimal risk to the public and liability for Council (\$44,000)
- B. Continue Spiny Rush control program and undertake additional environmental management requirements for the site as needed (\$7,000)
- C. **Retain and renovate the buildings (Stage 2 costs estimated at \$371,000 plus \$25,000 annual maintenance cost)**
- D. Support the DECWG proposal to establish a Steering Committee to assess the feasibility of the proposal and refine the Master Plan (\$6,000)
- E. Allow volunteers on-site to undertake approved activities
- F. Bring the revised Master Plan Report back to Council in June 2016

Option 3 (\$77,000) (recommended)

- A. Clean-up and maintain the site to a minimum standard, including fencing, that ensures a minimal risk to the public and liability for Council (\$44,000)
- B. Continue Spiny Rush control program and undertake additional environmental management requirements for the site as needed (\$7,000)
- C. **Demolish the buildings (\$20,000)**
- D. Support the DECWG proposal to establish a Steering Committee, refine the Master Plan with suitable community uses without the requirement for buildings (\$6,000)
- E. Allow volunteers on-site to undertake approved activities
- F. Bring the revised Master Plan Report back to Council in June 2016

Option 4 (\$71,000)

- A. Clean-up and maintain the site to a minimum standard, including fencing, that ensures a minimal risk to the public and liability for Council (\$44,000)
- B. Continue Spiny Rush control program and undertake additional environmental management requirements for the site as needed (\$7,000)
- C. **Demolish the buildings (\$20,000)**
- D. **Advise DECWG that there are currently no opportunities for community activities at Down's Estate.**

12.2 Down's Estate - Utilisation Options
Officers' Assessment

Option 1 does not include renovation or replacement building costs if determined by the Master Plan

Option 2 includes renovation costs which have currently been priced at \$371,000 plus \$25,000 annual maintenance cost.

Option 3 does not include costs for replacement buildings if the revised master plan determines these are needed.

All options include costing of fencing of the area around the buildings and the wetland area west of the shared trail to a standard required for Council's natural reserves.

These costings are only up-front costings and on-going funding for maintenance of the site would be required regardless of which option is chosen.

Further funding, to be determined, will be required based on the outcome for the revised Master Plan if one of Options 1-3 is adopted. *(Note that Stage 2 could extend over many years and could require funding that totals several million dollars, especially if new buildings are required.)*

There are no current resources included within the Annual Budget for this purpose. Consideration for funding will need to be referred to the Mid-Year Budget Review.



Down's Estate Community Working Group (DECWG)

Email: downsestate@gmail.com

Facebook: [/Downs-Estate-Community-Working-Group/674110345965853](https://www.facebook.com/Downs-Estate-Community-Working-Group/674110345965853)

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.

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

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.



(as at January, 2016)

Down's Estate Community Working Group (DECWG)
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Facebook: /Downs-Estate-Community-Working-Group/1411034056163
Forum: www.sewvntc.org/forum

Down's Estate Community Working Group (DECWG) - 12-month Proposal - BUDGET

Item No. & Description	Estimated Material Costs \$	LABOUR COSTS (all hours and hourly rates are estimates)										TOTAL COSTS				
		Contractor Labour			FCC Officer Supervision			Total Labour cost \$	Total Gross Cost \$	Estimated Material Cost Volunteers Only \$	Less Cost Savings - Volunteer Labour (Unpaid, used)				Total Net Cost \$	
		Hours Required	Rate Per Hour	Labour Cost	Hours Required	\$54 per hr	Workers				Hours Required	Total Hours	Savings			

STAGE ONE - 3 month Feasibility Phase - from March 2016

ITEM 1. CLEAN UP SITE/REMOVE HAZARDS Rubbish and Fallen Branch Removal around Buildings Hire Skip 3m X 1 Mowing Mower Hire and Fuel (Volunteers only) Hazardous Tree and Branch Removal																				
ITEM 1 TOTALS	\$ 120	140	\$ 12,220	13	\$ 702	\$ 12,922	\$ 13,042	\$ 350		34	248	\$ 8,050	\$ 5,332							
ITEM 2. SECURITY & SAFE ACCESS Posts & Fencing 150m (star pickets & wire) Temporary Fencing 100m (orange barrier mesh) Portable Toilet Hire (10 Weeks) Matched Pallets (mule - Tree of Change) Signage																				
ITEM 2 TOTALS	\$ 1,300	47	\$ 3,055	12	\$ 648	\$ 3,703	\$ 5,003	\$ -		15	53	\$ 3,055	\$ 1,948							
ITEM 3. REVIEW OF MASTER PLAN Steering Committee meetings - DECWG & FCC Officers Workshop Planning and Materials Workshop with other Stakeholders x 1																				
ITEM 3 TOTALS	\$ 250		\$ -	43	\$ 2,322	\$ 2,322	\$ 2,572	\$ -		52	312	\$ -	\$ 2,572							
STAGE ONE SUB-TOTALS	\$ 1,670	187	\$ 15,275	68	\$ 3,672	\$ 18,947	\$ 20,617	\$ 350		101	613	\$ 11,115	\$ 9,852							

STAGE ONE BUDGET SUMMARY:
Total Gross Cost to FCC: \$ 20,617
Total Savings to FCC with Volunteer contributions: **\$ 11,115**
Total Net Cost to FCC: **\$ 9,852**

Total Volunteer Hours 513

- Notes:
1. All estimates are based on quotations and research
 2. FCC Officer times are based on the assumption that DECWG volunteers have been accredited for TEFN insurance and assume a partial supervision role for certain tasks



(as at January, 2016)

Down's Estate Community Working Group (DECWG)
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Down's Estate Community Working Group (DECWG) - 12-month Proposal - BUDGET

Item No & Description	Estimated Material Costs \$	LABOUR COSTS (all hours and hourly rates are estimates)						TOTAL COSTS				
		Contractor Labour		FCC Officer Supervision		Total Labour Cost \$	Estimated Materials Cost Volunteers Only \$	Less Cost Savings Volunteer Labour (Unpaid, used)	Hours Required	Total Hours	Savings	Total Net Cost \$
		Hours Required	Rate Per Hour	Hours Required	\$ per hr							

STAGE TWO - 9 month Implementation Phase - from June 2016

ITEM 4. FACILITIES												
Portable Toilet Hire (10 Weeks)	\$ 330					\$ -						\$ 330
Driveway & Carport (Curbable Topping) 400 M ²	\$ 3,000	66	\$ 65		\$ 324	\$ 4,484			5	24	\$ 120	\$ 3,324
Walkway Pavers 50m (Sand & Edge)	\$ 1,000	24	\$ 65		\$ 1,560	\$ 1,772			5	8	\$ 40	\$ 1,162
Rustic Plastic Furniture: Table, Bench, Cement & Fences	\$ 400	60	\$ 65		\$ 3,900	\$ 4,052			4	30	\$ 120	\$ 562
Electricity - Mains To Buildings						\$ 13,900						\$ 13,900
Outdoor Floodlights X 7 (Solar Powered?)	\$ 650	8	\$ 65		\$ 520	\$ 552			3	2	\$ 12	\$ 812
ITEM 4 TOTALS	\$ 5,380	154			\$ 23,910	\$ 24,720			64	300	\$ 10,010	\$ 20,090
ITEM 5. HOUSE (EXTERIOR)												
Brickwork	\$ 100	8	\$ 65		\$ 520	\$ 682			2	8	\$ 16	\$ 262
Windows	\$ 1,400	15	\$ 65		\$ 1,050	\$ 1,232			2	16	\$ 32	\$ 1,562
Roof & Gutters	\$ 500	10	\$ 65		\$ 650	\$ 812			3	6	\$ 18	\$ 662
Face Linings	\$ 400	30	\$ 65		\$ 1,950	\$ 2,112			3	20	\$ 60	\$ 562
Water Tanks (Plum and Pipe Repairs)					\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500						\$ 1,500
Doors (Interior & Exterior)	\$ 1,100	20	\$ 65		\$ 1,300	\$ 1,452			3	24	\$ 72	\$ 1,262
ITEM 5 TOTALS	\$ 3,500	84			\$ 5,980	\$ 7,770			74	198	\$ 5,450	\$ 5,810
ITEM 6. HOUSE (INTERIOR)												
Electric Rewiring (Materials & Labour inclusive)	\$ 5,000		\$ 150		\$ -	\$ 152						\$ 5,162
Plaster	\$ 800	40	\$ 65		\$ 2,600	\$ 2,752			2	40	\$ 80	\$ 962
Painting	\$ 250	40	\$ 65		\$ 2,600	\$ 2,752			4	40	\$ 160	\$ 412
Flooring	\$ 800	35	\$ 65		\$ 2,300	\$ 2,502						\$ 962
Plumbing	\$ 1,000	20	\$ 150		\$ 3,000	\$ 3,152			3	24	\$ 72	\$ 4,162
Bathroom Fixtures & Tiles	\$ 4,000	40	\$ 65		\$ 2,600	\$ 2,752						\$ 6,762
Laundry Fixtures	\$ 1,000	20	\$ 65		\$ 1,300	\$ 1,452						\$ 2,462
Kitchen Fixtures & Tiles	\$ 5,000	40	\$ 65		\$ 2,600	\$ 2,752						\$ 8,762
Refrigerator To let (Details decided during Stage 1)	\$ 5,000	10	\$ 150		\$ 1,500	\$ 1,652						\$ 6,662
ITEM 6 TOTALS	\$ 23,850	246	\$ 840		\$ 18,540	\$ 19,998			104	312	\$ 7,530	\$ 36,308

Notes:

1. All estimates are based on quotations and research
2. FCC Officer times are based on the assumption that DECWG volunteers have been accredited for FEFN insurance and assume a partial supervision role for certain tasks



(as at January, 2016)

Down's Estate Community Working Group (DECWG)
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 Forum: www.sewprc.co.nz/forum

Down's Estate Community Working Group (DECWG) - 12-month Proposal - BUDGET

Item No. & Description	Estimated Material Costs \$	LABOUR COSTS (all hours and hourly rates are estimates)						TOTAL COSTS							
		Contractor Labour			FCC Off-site Supervision			Total Labour costs	Total Gross Cost \$	Estimated Materials Cost \$	Less Cost Savings - Volunteer Labour (Unpaid, used)			Total Net Cost \$	
		Hours Required	Rate Per Hour	Labour Cost	Hours Required	\$64 per hr	Volunteers Only				Workers	Hours Required	Total Hours		Savings
ITEM 7: BARN (SHED) Tin Sheeting Guttering (At Same Time As House) Painting Permanant Footprint (Details decided during Stage 1)	\$ 200	15	\$ 65	\$ 975	3	\$ 152	\$ 1,137	\$ 1,337	\$ -	3	10	30	\$ -	\$ 975	\$ 362
	\$ 1,000	20	\$ 65	\$ 1,300		-	\$ 1,300	\$ 2,300	\$ -	3	10	30	\$ -	\$ 1,300	\$ 1,000
	\$ 250	30	\$ 65	\$ 1,950	3	\$ 152	\$ 2,112	\$ 2,362	\$ -	4	20	80	\$ -	\$ 1,950	\$ 412
	\$ 5,000	10	\$ 150	\$ 1,500	3	\$ 152	\$ 1,652	\$ 6,652	\$ -				\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6,652
	\$ 5,450	75		\$ 5,725	9	\$ 466	\$ 6,211	\$ 12,651	\$ -	40	140	420	\$ -	\$ 4,225	\$ 8,426
STAGE ONE SUB-TOTALS	\$ 39,180	559		\$ 55,135	66	\$ 3,564	\$ 58,699	\$ 97,879	\$ -	282	950	2,730	\$ -	\$ 27,235	\$ 70,644
GRAND TOTAL FOR STAGE ONE AND TWO	\$ 40,950	746		\$ 70,410	134	\$ 7,236	\$ 77,646	\$ 118,496	\$ 350	383	1,563	4,113	\$ -	\$ 38,350	\$ 80,496

STAGE ONE BUDGET SUMMARY:

Total Gross Cost to FCC: \$ 20,637
 Total Savings to FCC with Volunteer contribution: **\$ -** **11,115**
 Total Net Cost to FCC: \$ 9,852

Total Volunteer Hours 513

STAGE TWO BUDGET SUMMARY:

Total Gross Cost to FCC: \$ 97,879
 Total Savings to FCC with Volunteer contribution: **\$ -** **27,235**
 Total Net Cost to FCC: \$ 70,644

Total Volunteer Hours 950

TOTAL BUDGET SUMMARY:

Total Gross Cost to FCC: \$ 118,495
 Total Savings to FCC with Volunteer contribution: **\$ -** **38,350**
 Net Cost to FCC: \$ 80,495
 Plus Contingency 10%: \$ 8,050
 Total Net Cost to FCC: **\$ 88,545**

Total Volunteer Hours 1563

Notes:

1. All estimates are based on quotations and research
2. FCC Officer times are based on the assumption that DECWG volunteers have been accredited for TEFN insurance and assume a partial supervision role for certain tasks

Attachment C: Down's Estate - Conditions Report - July 2014

Reference: 295/2014-ENF
Enquiries: Rob Hicks
Telephone: 9784 1795
Facsimile: 9784 1087
Email: rob.hicks@frankston.vic.gov.au



22 July 2014

Frankston City Council
30 Davey Street
FRANKSTON VIC 3199

Re: General Condition Report of all existing buildings
At: Downs Estate at 43R Austin Road (also known as 191R Old Wells Rd), Seaford 3198

Dear Sir Madam,

This report has been requested by the Infrastructure Department as a result of the initial requests made by Councillors and the current Master plan. The building assessment is to provide you with the condition of the existing buildings/structures along with the main regulatory implications under the Building Act, Regulations and Building Code of Australia for any future public use of the buildings/structures.

Immediate Safety Issues

The Building Department have been involved with general onsite inspections on the safety of the buildings since 2009 from requests from other Departments.

The two northern most large sheds were demolished late last year as a result of major failure of the structural wall and roof portal frame that was an immediate danger to the public.

Continual vandalism and illegal access into the buildings have also been occurring over the years with graffiti and damage to the buildings.

The dwellings asbestos eave and soffits were also damaged last year that was immediately removed and shuttering installed to access doorways to restrict access.

My onsite inspection of the buildings last week on 17 July 2014 on a reasonably windy day revealed immediate safety issues with loose and dangerous roof sheeting along with illegal access and use within the southern most large shed as detailed below:

1. Front double carport (no. 2) – entire roof sheeting loose & flapping. All roof sheeting has since been removed.
2. Dwelling (No 1) contained several roof sheets that had blown off and hanging to the north-western gable end. The framework was exposed to inclement weather. The roof sheeting is being re-fixed this week.
3. Outbuilding (No. 3) to the rear of the dwelling contained loose roof sheeting. Remedial work as per above.
4. Loose sheeting was also located on the ground that could become an airborne projectile in high winds. This is being removed this week.
5. Large southerly side shed (No. 5) was being illegally used as a skate board and scooter rink with jumps and recent graffiti installed.

This building has since had all access openings installed with metal shuttering to restrict public access.

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ABN: 49 454 768 065

Attachment C: Down's Estate - Conditions Report - July 2014

Building Location Schedule

- No. 1 - Disused Dwelling
- No. 2 - Front Double Carport
- No. 3 - Rear outbuildings
- No. 4 - Concrete Water Tank with another two at rear and side of dwelling
- No. 5 - Large southerly side Shed
- No. 6 - Outbuilding
- No. 7 - Concrete Water Tank windmill frame
- No. 8 - Chicken Pen



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No. 1 - Disused Dwelling

Access within the dis-used dwelling was not possible, however the obvious significant issues related to reinstating this as a Public Building are as follows:

1. New roof cladding, roof battens, fascias, guttering & downpipes.
2. Tie down all rafters and roof framework to walls.
3. Re-plastering all ceiling and walls & reinstating eave linings.
4. Broken windows that require re-newing with potentially to 6 Star Energy Rating for conditioned buildings.
5. Insulation to walls, ceiling and other energy efficiency measures.
6. Re-wiring entire building and new switchboard.
7. New plumbing services throughout.
8. Disabled access, toilet, ramps and all corridors and walls renewed for circulation requirements.
9. Re-newing of brick ties supporting external walls and gable end exposed to corrosive environment, re-stumping, replacing any deteriorated timber framework.
10. A comprehensive structural condition report would be required on the roof, ceiling, walls & subfloor framework & flooring.
11. Justification would be required to reduce the standard live load of 3.0 kPa to 1.5kPa domestic rating.
12. Gable end single skin external brickwork was inadequately tied to the framework requiring reinforcing or removal.
13. Entry column supporting part of above gable end brickwork and lintel recommended to be upgraded.

A Change of Use Building Permit and Occupancy Permit would be required that requires an assessment to the current standards in accordance with the requirements of Regulation 1011.

A change of use approval for this existing older building will incur higher costs as part of this process where only partial compliance and exemptions may be possible where structural integrity, amenity, health, amenity and safety is not compromised.



Front view of dwelling



Carport at front of dwelling



Entry roof space



Front Entry



Rear north side of dwelling



North Side view of dwelling



Westerly rear side view

No. 1 - Disused Dwelling

Conclusion

This building should be maintained at a minimum if of importance that is currently not the case with water ingress and weather exposure. If the building is not appropriately upgraded and utilised I recommend demolition to remove any future danger.

No. 2 – Front Double Carport

Conclusion

Recommend immediate demolition of the double carport as it is structurally unsound, poses a danger and provides not importance of value.

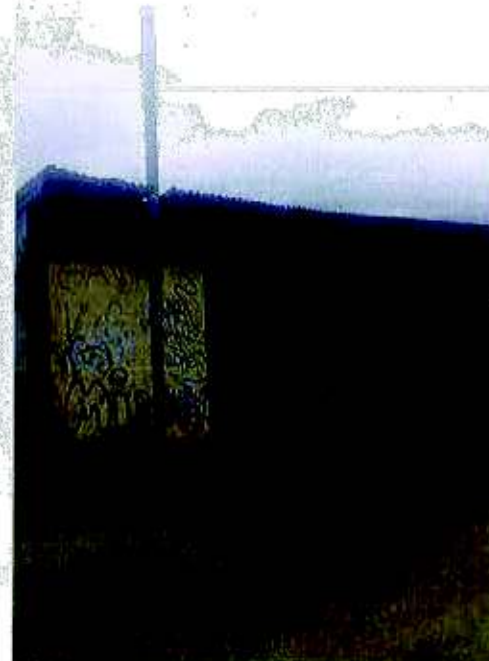


No. 3 – Rear outbuildings behind Dwelling

Conclusion

This building is old, tired and at end of lifespan with sagging roof framing members, loose roof sheeting, deteriorated timber, rusted fixings and loose cladding allowing water ingress to non durable timber.

Unless renewal of timber framework and cladding is invested in the near future, due to the safety issues with the building blowing away in strong winds, I recommend immediate demolition of this building.



N0. 8 - Chicken Pen

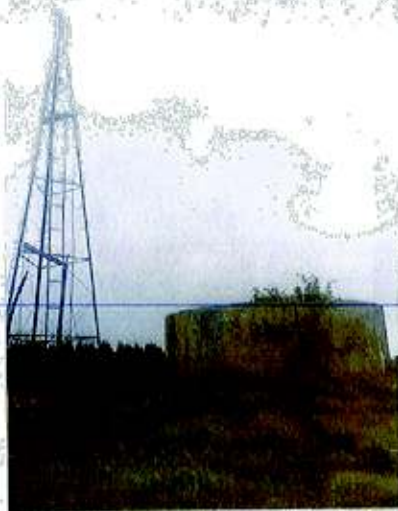
Conclusion

This small building is at the end of its lifespan with loose sheeting and deteriorated members and should be immediately demolished.



Located at rear of large southerly side shed

No. 7 – Concrete Water Tank windmill frame



Cracked concrete tank beside bycycle track

No. 6 – Outbuilding



old outbuilding beside concrete tank No. 7

Conclusion

Recommend the demolition of the above structures that are at the end of their life spans. The windmill with removed blades also provides unrestricted access to top of frame.

Attachment C: Down's Estate - Conditions Report - July 2014

No. 5 – Large southerly side Shed

This approximately 260m² building is in reasonable structural condition considering its age and lack of maintenance. There was illegal use of the building as a skateboarding and scooter centre at my time of inspection last week. All openings have since been permanently secured with screw fixed metal shuttering.

The walls and roof did contain some metal plated cross bracing and the steel portal frames appeared to be performing satisfactory where they were imbedded into footings and timber wall girts were bolted to these portals.

The gable end walls have been additionally reinforced with a diagonal metal brace from roof but some additional strengthening upgrade of the portal and gable end walls would be required.

The external wall and roof cladding requires refixing at a minimum along with replacement of guttering. The gable end wall bottom plates have completely deteriorated in parts and requires the walls to be structurally upgraded.

If the building is to be used as an outbuilding then the replacement of roof and wall cladding would not be necessary.



Loose roof sheeting to south side of large shed

Attachment C: Down's Estate - Conditions Report - July 2014



Illegal use of shed as a skateboard and scooter centre



Steel Portal Frame Columns & timber wall girts



Gable End Walls with additional wall bracing



Deteriorated timber bottom plates to gable end walls



Steel Portal Frame Columns & timber wall girts

Frankston City Council
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ABN: 49 454 768 065

Overall Summary

These buildings and structures pose a continual risk and liability to Council due to no maintenance, continual degradation and deterioration that are a safety and liability risk considering the nearby public Peninsula Link Trail, nearby road and illegal trespass and access.

The property would also be classified as derelict and dilapidated property imposing a 200% rate increase if a private property.

The following Buildings/Structures should be demolished as soon as possible due to the end of their life span and medium risk:

- No. 2 – Front Double Carport
- No. 3 – Rear outbuildings
- No. 6 – Outbuilding & windmill frame
- No. 7 – Concrete Water Tank
- No. 8 – Chicken Pen

A decision should be made on the future of the below Buildings/Structures on whether suitable maintenance and upgrade be carried out be invested to reduce regular loose roof sheeting, water ingress and deterioration.

- No. 1 – Disused Dwelling
- No. 4 – Concrete Water Tank with another two at rear and side of dwelling
- No. 5 – Large southerly side Shed

Do not hesitate to contact me for any further information or to elaborate further on the above by telephoning me on ph. 9784 1795.

Yours faithfully,



Rob Hicks
Municipal Building Surveyor

QS assessment for Downs Estate Buildings

Project Name: Preparation and Reinstatement of Downs Estate
 Project No:

COST PLAN (Estimate) - prepared by Aquenta Consulting

ITEM	SECTION	INITIAL BUDGET	INITIAL BUDGET (Est)	YTD EXPENDI TURE	POTENTIAL VARIATION COST	FUNDS REMAINING (COMMITTED):
1	Build Cost (See separate detailed sheet attached)	\$ -	\$ 244,580.00	\$ -	\$ 20,876.08	\$ 244,580.00
2	Professional Fees	\$ -	\$ 20,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 20,000.00
2A	Consultants	\$ -	\$ 20,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 20,000.00
2B	Overheads	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
3	Authority Fees	\$ -	\$ 30,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 30,000.00
4	Contingency	\$ -	\$ 36,687.00	\$ -	\$ 36,687.00	\$ 36,687.00
4A	Design Contingency	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
4B	Construction Contingency	\$ -	\$ 36,687.00	\$ -	\$ 36,687.00	\$ 36,687.00
5	Maintenance Life Cycle Cost	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
6	Provisional Sums	\$ -	\$ 20,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 20,000.00
7	FF&E	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	TOTALS	\$ -	\$ 351,267.00	\$ -	\$ 57,563.08	\$ 351,267.00

QS assessment for Downs Estate buildings

Build Cost

Item No	Description	Total Claim	Previous claims	Previous %	Completion to date	To Date %	Claimed this month	Current Month %	Balance Remaining	Final Estimate cost to Complete
	Preliminaries & Supervision									
1	Preliminaries		\$ -	0.0%	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -	\$ -
2			\$ -	0.0%	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -	\$ -
	Trades									
3	Carpentry	\$ 20,000.00	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -	0.0%	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00
4	Plastering	\$ 17,000.00	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -	0.0%	\$ 17,000.00	\$ 17,000.00
5	Roofing	\$ 60,560.00	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -	0.0%	\$ 60,560.00	\$ 60,560.00
6	Kitchen	\$ 47,400.00	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -	0.0%	\$ 47,400.00	\$ 47,400.00
7	Sanitary Fixtures and	\$ 12,970.00	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -	0.0%	\$ 12,970.00	\$ 12,970.00
8	Hardware	\$ 5,000.00	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -	0.0%	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00
9	Electrical	\$ 18,000.00	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -	0.0%	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00
10	Mechanical	\$ 8,000.00	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -	0.0%	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 8,000.00
11	Plumbing	\$ 25,650.00	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -	0.0%	\$ 25,650.00	\$ 25,650.00
12	Extras	\$ 15,000.00	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -	0.0%	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00
13	Concrete Water Tank	\$ 15,000.00	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -	0.0%	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00
14			\$ -	0.0%	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -	\$ -
	Total Build Cost	\$ 244,580.00	\$ -		\$ -		\$ -		\$ 244,580.00	\$ 244,580.00

Attachment E: Down's Estate - Land Capability and Potential - March 2015

Down's Estate - Land capability and potential - Message (HTML)

From: Ian Wheatland
To: David Gray
Cc: David Farbridge, Michael Poojapourou
Subject: Down's Estate - Land capability and potential

Sent: Thu, 26/03/2015 3:36 PM

Hi David

I have undertaken review of the land capability potential of the Down's Estate property. I have reviewed the Preliminary Acid Sulphate and Salinity Assessment Report prepared by Geoquintards Environmental and spoken to the report's author, Emmanuel Ernati, to gain an understanding of the site's potential and limitations.


In essence the following points summarise the limitations and potential of the site:

- Both acid sulphate soils and high salinity soils were identified on-site.
- The groundwater movement through the soils is considered dynamic with acid sulphate soils and high salinity potentially occurring across the entire site depending on environmental conditions and groundwater movement.
- Acid sulphate soils do not pose a contamination threat unless the soils are excavated or disturbed (such as with the construction or demolition of buildings or works OR by undertaking tilling or turning of the soils).
- High salinity could significantly limit agricultural potential across the site.
- The excavation or disturbance of soils on the site should be kept to a minimum.
- The excavation or disturbance of soils for specific purpose (such as construction or demolition of buildings or works OR the modification of the drainage channel) would require the commission of an Environmental Management Plan and works would be required to be supervised by an environmental scientist as soil testing and mitigation measures may be required throughout works.
- I suggest that any soil modification on the site be undertaken by the provision of soils from off-site, and works to be conducted above the natural level of the soil (such as the use of above-ground garden beds for any proposed agriculture projects, or the use of above-ground bunding for any proposed modification to the drainage channel, as opposed to excavation).

The above principles should be taken into account when considering any proposed works on the site.

If you require further information on this matter please let me know.

Kind regards


Ian Wheatland >> Biodiversity Officer
Planning & Environment >> Biodiversity
Civic Centre >> 53 Davey Street Frankston >> PO Box 490 Frankston VIC 3199

FEFN AGREED WORKS PLAN 2015- [XXXX Reserve]

DATE/TIME	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	METHOD	Equipment	NOTES
18/01/2015	Weed Control	Site A - between Gate 1 & centre track - starting at southern end	Handweed small woody weeds, scramblers / climbers, and grasses	Secateurs, hand trowels & hand saws if necessary	Weed bags left for collection at Gate 1 No branch piles to be created during Fire Danger Period
15/02/2015	Weed Control	Site A - between Gate 1 & centre track - starting at southern end	Handweed small woody weeds, scramblers / climbers, and grasses	Secateurs, hand trowels & hand saws if necessary	Weed bags left for collection at Gate 1 No branch piles to be created during Fire Danger Period
15/03/2015	Weed Control	Site A - between Gate 1 & centre track - starting at southern end	Handweed small woody weeds, scramblers / climbers, and grasses	Secateurs, hand trowels & hand saws if necessary	Weed bags left for collection at Gate 1 No branch piles to be created during Fire Danger Period
19/04/2015	Weed control	Site B - between Gate 2 & centre track - starting at northern boundary	Handweed small woody weeds, scramblers / climbers, and grasses	Secateurs, hand trowels & hand saws if necessary	Weed bags left for collection at Gate 1 No branch piles to be created during Fire Danger Period
17/05/2015	Weed control	Site B - between Gate 2 & centre track - starting at northern boundary	Handweed small woody weeds, scramblers / climbers, and grasses	Secateurs, hand trowels & hand saws if necessary	Weed bags left for collection at Gate 1 Notify Ranger of any branch piles needing collection
21/06/2015	Weed control	Site D - between Gate 3 and bike path - starting at Gate 3	Handweed small woody weeds, scramblers / climbers, and grasses	Secateurs, hand trowels & hand saws if necessary	Weed bags left for collection at Gate 3 Notify Ranger of any branch piles needing collection
19/07/2015	Weed control	Site D - between Gate 3 and bike path - starting at Gate 3	Handweed small woody weeds, scramblers / climbers, and grasses	Secateurs, hand trowels & hand saws if necessary	Weed bags left for collection at Gate 3 Notify Ranger of any branch piles needing collection
18/08/2015	Litter removal	Whole reserve - start at northern boundary and sweep through reserve	Pick up and bag litter		Bags left for collection at Gate 1
20/09/2015	Weed control	Site C - between Gate 2 & centre track - starting at southern boundary	Handweed small woody weeds, scramblers / climbers, and grasses	Secateurs, hand trowels & hand saws if necessary	Weed bags left for collection at Gate 1 Notify Ranger of any branch piles needing collection
18/10/2015	Weed control	Site C - between Gate 2 & centre track - starting at southern boundary	Handweed small woody weeds, scramblers / climbers, and grasses	Secateurs, hand trowels & hand saws if necessary	Weed bags left for collection at Gate 1 Notify Ranger of any branch piles needing collection

XXXXXX Reserve

FEFN AGREED WORKS PLAN 2015- [XXXX Reserve]

DATE/TIME	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	METHOD	Equipment	NOTES
15/11/2015	Weed control	Site E - fronting Ti-tree Cres - starting at Gate 3	Handweed small woody weeds, scramblers / climbers, and grasses	Secateurs, hand trowels & hand saws if necessary	Weed bags left for collection at Gate 3 No branch piles to be created during Fire Danger Period
22/12/2015	Weed control	Site E - fronting Ti-tree Cres - starting at Gate 3	Handweed small woody weeds, scramblers / climbers, and grasses	Secateurs, hand trowels & hand saws if necessary	Weed bags left for collection at Gate 3 No branch piles to be created during Fire Danger Period

NOTES:

- Refer to map below for Site and Gate locations
- All plants with seed to be bagged and removed from site. Bags to be collected by Ranger.
- The particular species to be hand weeded will depend on what has emerged during each month.
- Friends Group to conduct a watching brief on Greenhood Orchids from April – August.
- When Ranger is available, Friends Group can assist Rangers with removal of large woody weeds.

No works are to be conducted without the written approval of council officers as part of the agreed works plan.

*Notes on high risk tasks/equipment:

- Council officers must always be present during nominated high risk works such as chainsawing, gas burning, clearing saws/blade brush cutters and herbicide spraying. If council officer is not available these works are not approved.
- Each task date, method, location, equipment and SWMS must be approved by council officer prior to commencement
- All accreditation and documentation such as SWMS's must be provided to council prior to approval of high risk equipment and tasks.

Works plan review and approved by: Alan Wallis - Acting FS/NR Co-ordinator on 31/03/15

FEFN AGREED WORKS PLAN 2015- [XXXX Reserve]



A - Sites

1 - Gates



Frankston City Council Guidelines for Friends Group Volunteers Updated August 2015

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Frankston City Council Guidelines for Friends Groups Volunteers

These Guidelines have been prepared by Frankston City Council, for the assistance and support of Friends Group environmental volunteers in Frankston City's Natural Reserves.

The Guidelines have been developed in consultation with the following teams:

- Resource Efficiency
- Biodiversity
- Natural Reserves
- Health And Safety
- Risk Management

And Representatives of the Frankston Environmental Friends Network



Kamarruk Creek; Photo by Alison Kaiter

Introduction

For many years a number of Friends Groups have been working in partnership with Frankston City Council across a range of locations and activities and this work benefits not only the environment, but our whole community. Frankston City Council greatly appreciates the wonderful work done by volunteers in our natural reserves and the significant contribution they make to conserving our natural environment.

Part A of this manual is designed to be a "stand alone" document. These Guidelines contain important information for both new and experienced volunteers. It includes responsibilities, support, safety,

training, risk management, insurance, first aid and more. Part B contains helpful information for friends group and has been provided by the Frankston Environmental Friends Group.

Many long term volunteers and groups are very experienced in safe work practices and have a good understanding of Council's requirements and the nature of the working partnership between volunteers and Council, the land manager. However, sometimes volunteers are not aware of Council's safety and legal requirements, and Council wants to make sure that the safety of all volunteers is given the utmost priority.

It is anticipated that this manual will be a useful resource for Friends Groups, providing them with all they need to know about their volunteer work in Council's natural reserves and how they and Council can work together for the benefit of our precious natural environment. The Guidelines have been created specifically for the Friends Groups working on Council land. Other groups working in reserves managed by other land managers (e.g. Parks Victoria or Melbourne Water) will need to comply with the requirements of those organisations and work in partnership with them. However, those Friends Groups are welcome to use any information contained herein that may be useful for them.

The Guidelines contain all the background information, lists and forms required by Council for volunteers working on Council land. This will help ensure volunteer safety, plus contains information about ways Council can support Friends Groups. It is anticipated this will be helpful to both established and new Groups.

Each Friends Group needs to nominate an Activities Leader who coordinates the volunteers and liaises with Council Rangers on agreed work plans in accordance with Council policies, plans and guidelines. The Activities Leader is the person who runs the working bees, and may or may not be the President or Chair of the Friends Group. All Guidelines information is relevant to Activities Leaders and it is important that he/she reads and understands this information and agrees to bring it to the attention of all volunteers working with their Friends Group.

It is advisable that certain sections or appendices be made available for all Friends volunteers to read, e.g. Safety Prompts (Appendix I). This will be at the discretion of the Activities Leader, who can decide the best way to disseminate this information to his/her group.

The loose leaf format will enable information, lists and forms to be easily updated as required. A copy will be provided for each Friends Group and the information will also be made available online on Frankston City Council's website.

What is a Friends Group?

The city of Frankston is very fortunate to have a number Friends Groups. These groups consist of environmental volunteers with an interest in a particular natural reserve. Each Friends Group works with the Land Manager, whether it is Council or another organisation, to look after the reserve. While a Friends Group is an autonomous and independent group, they are not the management authority. They operate as a support group, working in partnership with the relevant land manager. Frankston City Council manages the vast majority of the municipality's natural reserves, with Parks Victoria and Melbourne Water owning and managing some of them.

The partnership between Friends Groups and Frankston City Council is a cooperative, mutually supportive relationship, which encourages appropriate volunteer participation and recognises the legal responsibilities of Council.

Friends Groups' activities are highly varied and include weed control, habitat restoration, seed collection, plant propagation, revegetation and community education. Groups have regular, on-going contact with Council Rangers and have approval to work on aspects of the management plans for each natural reserve.

Some groups have working bees several times a week, while others work weekly, monthly or a few times a year. Some groups have regular committee meetings, while others prefer to meet informally or on site only. Whatever way a Friends Group chooses to operate, it is a great way for local residents to connect with their immediate community and meet other like minded people who care for the environment and want to do something practical to help.

Each Friends Group needs to have an Activities Leader who can ensure that the group works safely and in accordance with these Council Guidelines.

Each Friends Group also needs to have a contact person who is able to act as liaison between the group and Council. This person need not necessarily be the Activities Leader

See page 10 for more details about Activities Leader responsibilities.

Frankston Environmental Friends Network (FEFN)

The Frankston Environmental Friends Network provides a forum for communication between Frankston City Council, Friends Groups and other environmental volunteer groups in the city of Frankston.

All Friends Groups in the municipality are encouraged to join the network as it is the main way that groups can support each other and stay in regular contact with Council.

The objectives of the Network include

- providing regular, consistent and effective avenues of communication between Council, the environment maintenance staff and the voluntary environmental community groups
- Acting as a collective voice for Member Groups in addressing environmental issues affecting the Frankston municipality
- Assisting individual Member Groups to see their reserve or role in relation to the "bigger picture"
- Providing a means of communication with authorities and environmental organisations and groups outside Frankston, on matters which affect Member Groups and Frankston's natural environment
- Providing wider support to each group in practical ways

Council Support

Volunteer Support

The Environmental Education Officer works in Frankston City Council's Sustainable Assets Department. The role of this person includes acting as a liaison contact between Council and the Friends Groups working in Natural Reserves and the Indigenous Nursery. She/he attends the monthly Frankston Environmental Friends Network (FEFN) meeting, reports on Council's environmental programs and events, organises training and helps promote environmental volunteering and the work of the Friends Groups.

The Environmental Education Officer can be contacted on 9784 1768.

See Appendix 10: Organisational chart of Frankston City Council See Appendix 11: Organisational chart of the Environment Department staff

Foreshore & Natural Reserves Teams

The Council's Natural Reserves Team Leader, the Foreshore Team Leader and the Rangers are responsible for the day-to-day management of Council's natural reserves. Their regular duties include weed control, planting, fire management and other park maintenance, as well as communicating with residents and the community on park values and protection.

Members of the team work closely with Friends Groups to ensure that work carried out in our reserves meets common aims and objectives.

The Natural Reserves Team can be contacted at the Operations Centre on 9768 1500.

See Appendix 12: Organisational chart of the Natural Reserves staff.

Working with Rangers

Rangers are employed by Frankston City Council to manage and undertake on ground work in Council's natural reserves. Friends Groups working in a Council reserve work in partnership with Council and the Ranger in charge of the reserve.

Agreed work plans are formulated within this partnership according to Council's management plan and conservation goals for the reserve. Friends groups will be asked to submit their proposed work plans for the coming year to Council by the end of January each year. Council's Foreshore and Natural Reserves teams will review and if necessary amend these plans to ensure that all works are consistent with Council's overall strategic objectives and any relevant master plans.

Friends Groups and Rangers have regular communication to ensure that work is in line with these plans. Rangers, on behalf of Council, have the responsibility to direct all work in the reserves, and Friends Groups must work in accordance with this guidance. In addition, Rangers need to ensure that the works proposed do not pose any risk to the safety of the volunteers.

See Appendix 15: Agreed Works Plan Example and Blank Template

Frankston Environmental Friends Network Meetings

One of the key ways Council supports the Friends and communicates with the volunteers is through the monthly FEFN meeting. Each Friends Group may send one or two representatives to the meeting, and this person is the key liaison between the group and Council. As communication is vital for any good working relationship, it is important that the representative(s) report back to their group with Council news and bring any important issues from their group to Council's notice.

Council's Environmental Education Officer, Biodiversity Coordinator and a representative from the Foreshore or Natural Reserves teams are usually present, and the meeting is a valuable way of keeping lines of communication open between Groups, Rangers, Council staff and the volunteers.

See Appendix 8: Contact list of Friends Groups in the Network

Training

To assist Friends Groups in working safely, Rangers work individually with groups to make sure safety procedures are in place and understood.

First Aid Training is also available regularly for Friends Group members and other more general training is available on request or on an as-needs basis, e.g. capacity building for groups, weed identification for new members etc. Training is provided free of charge by Council for Friends Group volunteers, within budget limitations. Other environmental volunteer groups that are members of the FEFN are also able to attend training where it is relevant to their needs.

Each year, Council's Environmental Education Officer seeks feedback from the FEFN on Friends Group volunteers' training needs. This process assists in planning and prioritising the training calendar for that year. Volunteers can request training according to need at other times throughout the year by contacting the Environmental Education Officer directly.

Tools for borrowing

Most Friends Groups are self sufficient with the tools they need, but there is a trailer with tools available for groups to borrow if needed. The trailer is kept at the Operations Centre in Buna Ave, Seaford.

Friends can contact the Operations Centre on 9768 1500 if they need to borrow any items from this trailer.

See Appendix 9: List of tools and details and conditions of borrowing.

Publicity and promotions

Council's Environmental Education Officer can assist with promoting the Friends Groups' activities by printing flyers and posters of events and placing information on the Council website, in the "What's On" column of local newspapers and in the bi monthly publication "Frankston City News".

Events such as Tree Planting Days, Clean up Australia Day, special activity days and the FEFN stall at the Waterfront Festival are all great ways for the community to learn about and take part in the work of the Friends Groups.

Organising Events

When organising an event in a natural reserve or public space, it is necessary to complete an Event Application form and submit it to Council prior to the event. This is so Council can keep track of events, avoid clashes and protect organisers, the public and the places themselves.

The most up-to-date information and forms can be found on Council's website under "Events".

Here you can learn how to apply for an event, keep the event safe, apply for funding for special events and apply for the use of event equipment. You can even check out the facilities at several of the more prominent venues located within Frankston City's boundaries.

Frankston City Council's Community Grants

Council is a major supporter of non-profit community organisations within the City through its annual Community Grants Program. Incorporated Friends Groups can apply for a grant and if a group is not incorporated they can ask one that is to auspice them for their application.

Friends Groups have received thousands of dollars from the Community Grants Program over the years for things such as new minor equipment and tools, development of promotional/educational materials, community environmental education activities and events.

Details about the Community Grants can be found on Council's website

Frankston Indigenous Nursery

McCulloch Ave, Seaford(Melway ref 99 F8)

The Frankston Indigenous Nursery is a Council-owned nursery that provides plants for local plantings and Friends Groups, as well as retail sales to the community. The nursery is a community facility, available to Friends Groups for propagation of plants, seed storage and providing meeting and library facilities to members of Friends Groups.

The nursery has a group of enthusiastic volunteers who meet regularly to assist with propagation of plants for reserves. The nursery also houses Friends Group equipment such as planting tools and a barbeque, available for use by Friends Groups.

Planting in natural reserves must be local provenance wherever possible, propagated from local seed stock or purchased from the Indigenous Nursery. For information on propagation facilities or plant availability and costs for purchase, contact the nursery.

Nursery staff will also assist with cost estimation for plant provision as part of grant submissions. Please allow plenty of time for raising plants in time for the planting season.

When Friends volunteers collect plants from the nursery for planting events, it is important that they make contact with the nursery staff before leaving with the plants, to let them know about the collection.

The Nursery is open every Wednesday from 9.00am—3.00pm and the first Saturday of every month, or by appointment. For more information on the services provided at the nursery, or to discuss plant needs for planting projects, call the nursery office on 9768 1513.

Working Safely

The health, safety and welfare of Frankston City's Friends Groups are of paramount importance. Volunteers are highly valued by Council and their right to a safe workplace is taken very seriously.

Council's Responsibility

Frankston City Council will ensure, so far as is practical, that volunteers are not exposed to foreseeable risks to their health or safety whilst volunteering with Friends Groups on Council land.

Council is committed to fulfilling both its moral and legal Occupational Health and Safety responsibilities to provide a safe and healthy work environment for employees, volunteers, contractors, customers and visitors.

Council will provide as high a level of protection against risks to volunteers' health and safety as is reasonably practicable and will monitor conditions at volunteer workplaces that are under Council's management and control.

Volunteer's Responsibility

Members of Friends Groups also have an obligation to protect their own health and safety by working in a safe manner whilst volunteering on Council land. Likewise, Friends Groups volunteering on land managed by other authorities need to be in contact with those organisations and work within their guidelines (which may be slightly different to those of Council).

Volunteers on Council land need to:

- take reasonable care of their own safety and that of others
- complete and sign the Annual Registration Form for volunteers, including information on pre-existing injuries or medical conditions. *See Appendix 2: Volunteer Registration Form*
- sign an Attendance Sheet every time they undertake physical work with the Friends group. *See Appendix 3: Attendance Sheet for Working Bees*
- use safety devices and protective clothing and equipment correctly
- only perform tasks or procedures for which they have received appropriate training and instruction
- work in the company of others, not alone
- not use chainsaws or other heavy machinery
- seek approval from Council Rangers before using any chemical weedkillers in the reserves
- report any accident or injury to the Activities Leader as soon as possible

- complete an Incident and Hazard Report Form, in event of an accident or injury. This needs to be given to the Activities Leader, who will refer it to Council's Environmental Officer. *See Appendix 4: Incident and Hazard Report Form*
- ensure that they are not, by the consumption of alcohol or drugs, in a state to endanger their own safety or that of others
- act and speak in a courteous and respectful manner to other Friends group members, Council Rangers, Officers and members of the public

Activities Leader's Responsibility

The role of the Friends Group Activities Leader is to liaise and work with Council Rangers and officers in coordinating and supervising Friends Group activities and ensuring the group works in accordance with Council policies, plans and guidelines.

The Activities Leader must liaise with the Council Ranger responsible for their Reserve before the group undertakes any practical work activities on Council land.

Activities Leaders need to:

1. Make sure a safe working site is provided for volunteers and the public using the Reserve during works and that safe work methods are always used. A template is included to assist Activities Leaders ensure safe work methods appropriate for the task, location and volunteers involved. See more information under Safe Work Methods on page 16.

See Appendix 14: Safe Work Methods Statement (SWMS)

2. Induct all new volunteers before they start work in the natural reserves, as well as existing volunteers who have not been previously inducted. A checklist of information to discuss with volunteers is provided to ensure consistent safety procedures for all Friends groups and volunteers.

See Appendix 5: Induction of New and Existing Volunteers

3. Ensure that volunteers read the **Safety Prompt** material as part of the induction process and that these prompts are regularly brought to the attention of Friends Group members during the year.

See Appendix 1: Safety Prompts

4. Complete a **Daily Site Checklist** prior to volunteers starting work at working bees and other events, to make sure all safety issues are addressed.

See Appendix 6: Daily Site Checklist

5. Ensure the **Attendance Sheet** is signed by all volunteers at every working bee and that these sheets are regularly given to Council's Environmental Education Officer. This is an essential requirement of Council's insurance policies.

See Appendix 3: Attendance Sheet for Working Bees

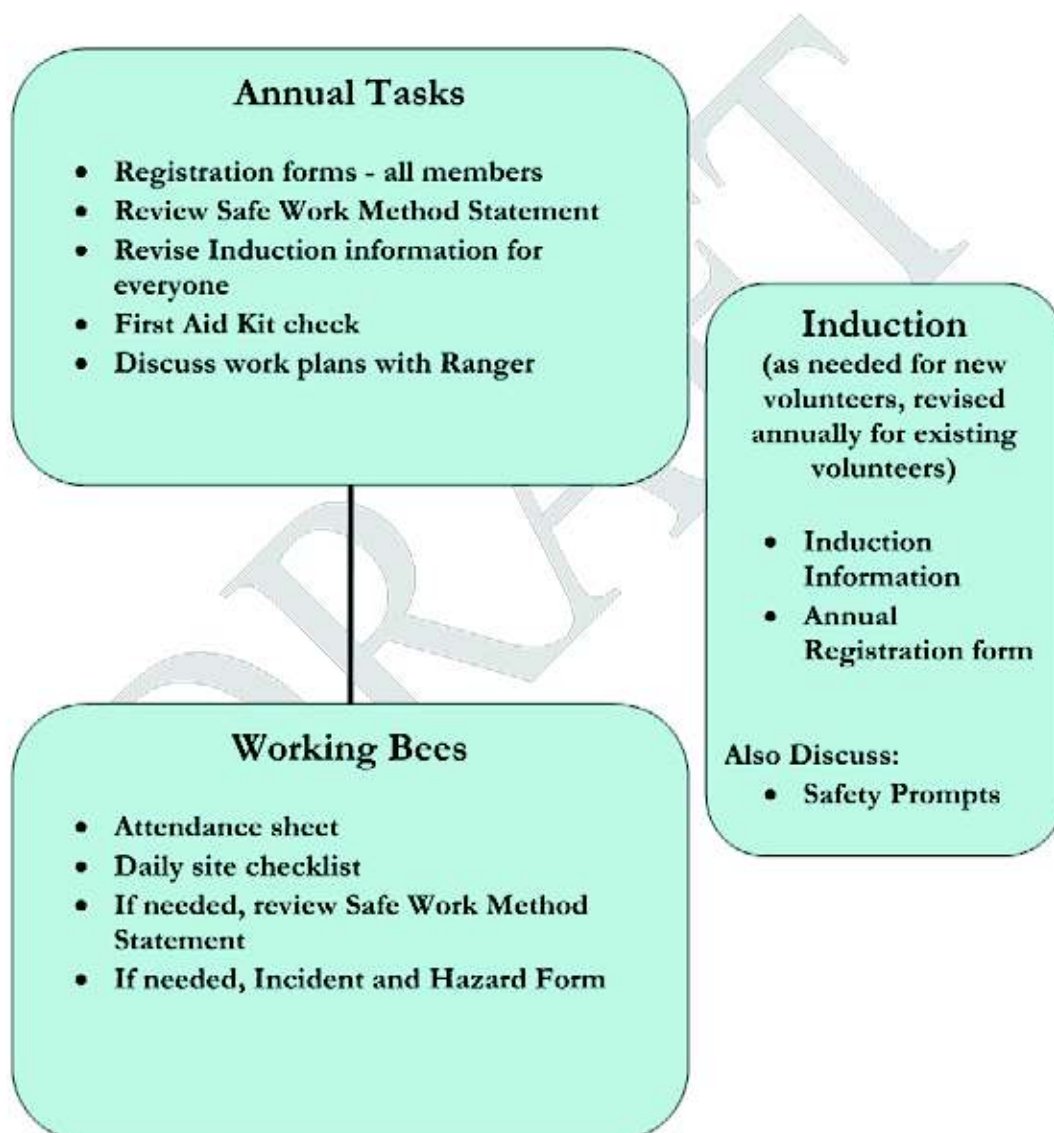
6. Make sure all **Annual Registration Forms** are completed and signed by all new and established Friends Group members who will undertake practical work in the reserve. These forms need to be updated annually.

See Appendix 2: Annual Registration Form for Volunteers

7. Ensure that if a volunteer is injured, or if a potential hazard is identified, that an **Incident and Hazard Report Form** is submitted to Council's Environmental Education and Volunteer Support Officer as soon as possible or on the next business day.

See Appendix 4: Incident and Hazard Report Form

Summary of Activities Leader's Tasks



Safe Work Method Statements (SWMS)

The Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS) is simply a means of looking at the work task and considering what is the safest way to complete it. It is a way of becoming aware of the hazards involved in doing the job and taking action to prevent an injury.

A SWMS worksheet is provided to help Activities Leaders assess the risks of Friends Group volunteers doing the job.

See Appendix 14: Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS)

The Activities Leader is responsible for going through the following steps with the Friends Group volunteers as often as he/she deems appropriate. This will not be necessary for every working bee, if the same activities and people are involved at the same location and conditions have not changed. In all likelihood it may only need to be done once or twice a year depending on the group's tasks, location etc.

But do be aware that if conditions *have* altered or if a new activity or location is introduced (e.g. working in a different section of the reserve) it may be necessary to consider making changes to the way the job was done previously.

The Activities Leader needs to:

1. **Document the activity:** Assemble those involved in the activity and then, using the SWMS worksheet, write down the tasks that make up the activity, step by step.
2. **Identify the hazards:** Next to each task, identify what part of the task may cause an injury, hazard or risk to those doing the work or to anyone else nearby.
3. **Document the control measures:** For each identified hazard, list the measures that need to be put in place to eliminate or minimise any likely risk of injury to those involved.
4. **Identify who is responsible:** Document the name of the person responsible for ensuring the control measures on the SWMS are implemented.
5. **Monitor and review:** Make sure the activity is supervised to ensure the documented process is being followed. The SWMS should be reviewed whenever a documented activity changes, when there is a change of personnel or after an appropriate length of time.

The SWMS does not take the place of the Daily Site Checklist, which should be done before every working bee or activity.

See Appendix 6: Daily Site Checklist

First Aid

First Aid Training

Frankston City Council provides free training and refresher update courses on a regular basis for members of Friends Groups. It is highly recommended that a trained First Aider is present at all working bees and activities.

Content of First Aid Kits

The St John Outdoors' First Aid Kit or equivalent is recommended for regular Friends Group activities. These kits should be supplemented by the addition of an approved resuscitation mask and any additional items deemed necessary after consideration of risks associated with tasks to be undertaken.

See Appendix 7: First Aid Kit contents

Management of First Aid Kits

Activities Leaders and/or the Friends Group' trained First Aider are responsible for managing their first aid kits, including:

- checking contents of first aid kits, before departure. Include emergency contact numbers and ensure hospital locations and contact numbers are known
- ensuring kits are freely accessible; that all participants know the whereabouts of the kits
- identifying any volunteers that hold first aid qualifications
- ensuring the adequacy of first aid kits in relation to any known pre-existing medical conditions or injuries (notwithstanding the personal responsibility of participants to provide their own medications in accordance with their personal risk management plan)
- re-stocking the kits as necessary. Council is able to provide some items in bulk orders or as needed.

Contact Council's Environmental Education Officer for assistance.

First Aid Medications

Under normal circumstances, the Friends Group does not supply medication. Members should be made aware of this and be asked to supply and administer their own medications if needed.

Infection Control Strategies

1. Create a barrier between the first aider and any blood or body fluids by using disposable non-latex gloves. Eye and other protective clothing may need to be considered in some circumstances.
2. Immediately and thoroughly wash, with soap and water, any part of the body that comes into contact with blood or body fluids. Flush eyes and mouth with clean water.
3. Carefully clean up blood spills and clean surfaces with disinfectant.
4. Appropriately launder or dispose of any items that have been soiled with blood or body fluids.

Incident and Hazard Reporting

Where a work injury or illness requires professional medical attention, renders a volunteer permanently or temporarily incapable of continuing with their duties, causes property loss or damage, or where a near miss occurs, an **Incident and Hazard Report Form** must be completed and sent to the Volunteer Support Officer as soon as possible or on the next business day.

See Appendix 4: Incident and Hazard Report Form

If an injury requires medical attention, it is possible for Council to reimburse some medical costs if necessary. The volunteer or Activities Leader must contact Council's Environmental Officer to discuss the injury before seeking treatment at Council's approved medical providers. For urgent medical treatment, volunteers must seek medical assistance.

The volunteer is responsible for the payment of the account after any consultation and should use Medicare or their own personal health insurance when available. Medical bills are not to be referred to Council. Council will then reimburse you for any gap payments and other associated expenses that may have been incurred.

If further and ongoing treatment is required, a management plan will be developed between either the insurer or in conjunction with Council's Environmental Education and Volunteer Support Officer and Health & Safety Officer

Frankston City Council's approved medical providers are:

Epic Health Medical Clinic
Gateway Village Shopping Centre
230 Cranbourne-Frankston Road, Langwarrin
Ph 9044 0010

Lifecare Physio
342 Nepean Hwy, Frankston 3199
Ph 9770 2343

Wallace Reserve

Insurance

The Friends Groups are covered by three separate insurance policies.

- All individuals working as volunteers on Council Reserves are covered under Frankston City Council's Public Liability Policy, subject to policy terms, conditions and exclusions.
- All individuals working as volunteers are also covered by Council's Personal Accident Policy subject to policy terms, conditions and exclusions. (N.B. Groups will need to be aware of terms and conditions as there are age limitations).
- The Friends Groups are covered under Council's Broad Form Public Liability Policy as an additional named insured. This policy will also cover the Friends Groups for social events that are not under Council direction e.g. Friends Group BBQs, Kananook Creek Celebration Day, and Christmas Parties etc.

Other special activity days such as Clean Up Australia Day and National Tree Day are covered by the insurance policies of the organisations that lead these events (e.g. Planet Ark – Tree Day). It is a good idea to check with the organiser just to make sure your group is covered.

- *Contact Council's Coordinator Risk Management on 9784 1775 to discuss.*

It is important to stress that there are limitations to what is covered by the above Insurance Policies for volunteers.

Volunteers MUST:

- be official members of the Friends Group or working under the guidance of the Friends Group as a visitor, working on Council land.
- work on agreed plans, with the approval of the Council's Natural Reserves team or Ranger.
- sign an "Attendance Sheet for Working Bees (see Appendix 2)" to show the day, time and location of their work.

Please note that Friends Groups operating in reserves managed by Parks Victoria, Melbourne Water, South East Water or Department of Sustainability and Environment (where Council is NOT the Committee of Management) ***are not covered*** under the above Council Insurance policies. These groups will need to check their cover with the relevant management authority.

Council recommends that Friends Groups obtain their own Public Liability Insurance and even Personal Accident Coverage to cover the Groups in instances where Council's policy will NOT apply.

A Community Insurance Scheme has been developed for Not-For-Profit Organisations. Details can be obtained at <http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/insurance> or by calling 9320 6800. This Scheme is a State Government initiative, with assistance of the Municipal Association of Victoria and Jardine Lloyd Thompson.

Incorporation

Frankston City Council strongly recommends that Friends Groups become "incorporated". This provides protection for individual members of the Friends Group in the event of legal action against the group.

- An incorporated body can sue and be sued, not the members that comprise the body. If an action against an incorporated body is successful, the incorporated body's assets will be sold to satisfy the court judgment, but the members of the body will not be personally liable.
- If the group is not incorporated, the individuals on the executive or committee may be sued, because an unincorporated body itself cannot be sued. This is because the group has no legal identity and only consists of the members at any given time.
- Incorporation also enables the group to apply for a range of grants. Incorporation forms are available at www.consumer.vic.gov.au or by phoning 1300 518181.

List of Appendices

- Appendix 1: **Safety Prompts**
- Appendix 2: **Annual Registration Form for Volunteers**
- Appendix 3: **Attendance Sheet for Working Bees**
- Appendix 4: **Incident and Hazard Report Form**
- Appendix 5: **Induction of New and Existing Volunteers**
- Appendix 6: **Daily Site Checklist for Friends Group Activities Leaders**
- Appendix 7: **Suggested contents list for First Aid Kits**
- Appendix 8: **Friends Groups Contact List**
- Appendix 9: **Community Volunteer Support Trailer Information**
- Appendix 10: **Frankston City Council Organisation Structure**
- Appendix 11: **Environment Organisation Structure**
- Appendix 12: **Natural Reserves Team Structure**
- Appendix 13: **Useful Contacts for Friends and Volunteers**
- Appendix 14: **Safe Working Methods Templates (SWMS)**
- Appendix 15: **Agreed Works Plan Example and Blank Template**