

# Darling Downs Residents Association

## Minutes from the AGM

### Conducted on 29 August 2024

## DDRA Annual General Meeting

The Darling Downs Residents Association (DDRA) Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held at the Oakford Community Centre at 57 Foxton Drive in Oakford on 29 August 2024.

### Meeting Opened

The meeting opened at 7.05 pm.

### Present

The following people attended the AGM:

Sharon Arena, Albert Baker, Tina Baker, Peter Benson, Nathan Bishop (Shire Councillor – Member for NW Ward), Kathy Brennan, Kevin Brimblecombe, Peter Cappendell, Bill Darnell, Simone Darnell, Eric Chabros, Penny Ellis, Dave Emery, Matt Emery, Allanah Fawcett, Carol Fawcett, Peter Galellis, Sue Gilbert, Nicky Gusterson, Bruce Hilliard, Pam Hilliard, Carol Indriold, Adam Kestel, Eugenie Kestel, Karen Nelson, Phil Petricevic, Noreen Petrovic, David Ransom, Gordon Scotchford, Tina Scotchford, Casey Turnbey, Brian Vale, and Robyn Vale.

In addition to these members, the following special guests were present: Mr Hugh Jones, MLA (Local Member for Darling Range), Cr Rob Coales (President of the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale), Cr Morgan Byas (Member for NW Ward)

### Apologies

The following apologies were received: Cr Tricia Duggin (Deputy President of the Shire), Jerome Donders, Shirly Donders, Patricia Holland, Perry Holland, Marissa Marriot, Amanda Smith, Mal Smith, Ian Stanley, Wendy Stanley, Chris Thompson, Peter Thompson, and Deb Venturini.

### Previous AGM Minutes

Three points were highlighted from the previous AGM Minutes. These included the implementation of the Rain Lover Court turnaround, implications of the Thomas Road Upgrade and the other workstreams. After discussing pertinent aspects of the preceding AGM Minutes, a vote was conducted on the following resolution.

#### **Resolution**

To accept the minutes of the AGM dated 27 September 2023 and the information provided on the outcomes of matters arising from the minutes.

Proposed by: Eugenie Kestel  
Seconded by: Carol Fawcett  
Vote outcome: *Carried unanimously*

## The Thomas Road Upgrade

Bruce Hilliard provided background information on the Thomas Road Upgrade planning and implementation. This information is provided on Slides 8 to 15 within the AGM PowerPoint presentation (AGMPP) (see [PowerPoint Presentation \(ddra.org.au\)](http://ddra.org.au)). In particular, these slides were used to outline the significant risks associated with the increased traffic using that road and the lack of a safety/visual/noise barrier. These risks can lead to catastrophic and deadly accidents. It was also noted that Mr Hugh Jones, MLA (Member for Darling Range), had been in discussions with the Minister for Transport to advocate for the provision of a safety wall to separate the bridle trail from the traffic on Thomas Road. Mr Jones provided an update on the progress of these discussions to the attendees. His approach is focused on helping ensure the community is protected by an appropriate safety wall. The AGM attendees appreciated his candour and support.

The DDRA committed to continue collaborating with Mr Jones, and keeping the community informed on progress.

## Lot 9009 Subdivision – Implications for the use of the 70 Acres

Bruce Hilliard provided some background information on the implications of the planned subdivision just east of the 70 Acres in the Darling Downs Equestrian Park (DDEP). The information covered in this exposition was provided using Slides 16 to 22 in the AGMPP presentation. The following key points were noted:

- The owner of Lot 9009 is attempting to subdivide and sell the area. He intended to sell one-acre (0.4 hectare) blocks. However, according to the zoning, the minimum block size needs to be one hectare to meet the special rural requirements. Consequently, the zoning is still under consideration by the State Planning Commission (SPC).
- It was noted that the block sizes would impact the utilisation of these properties that adjoin the 70 Acres. For example, small blocks would not be able to be utilised for keeping horses, which makes other uses, such as riding motorcycles, more likely.
- The last hot summer killed many plants designed to form a vegetation barrier between the slow track and Lot 9009. This problem has left many gaps in the planned vegetation barrier. Consequently, there are substantial risks that dogs barking at passing horses or loud noises on the adjoining properties may spook the mount on the slow track and cause accidents. This risk is particularly true when the slow track is as little as about five metres from the adjoining properties.
- Consequently, effort should be made to ensure that there are appropriate barriers between the properties and the equine users. As a part of this effort, the DDRA and Shire have been working together to plant and nurture native trees and bushes along this boundary. However, it will take many years until these seedlings can provide the needed barrier. Consequently, it was agreed that other types of temporary barriers may be required along this boundary of the 70 Acres, and/or vegetation barriers or physical separators will be required on the western boundary of Lot 9009.
- During the discussion about flooding (as conducted later in the AGM), it was also proposed that a sump easement be provided on the western boundary of Lot 9009 to act as another important physical separator between these blocks and the users within the 70 Acres.

Cr Rob Coales (Shire President) also led a short and well-received discussion, making it clear that he and the Shire understand the problems and will do what they can to help ensure that users of the 70 Acres can use the area safely.

## Drainage and Flooding in the Darling Downs Area

Background information on the causes of the flooding in the Darling Downs area was covered using Slides 23 to 31 in the AGMPP presentation. As outlined in this presentation, it appears that the problem stems from changes in the drainage systems created by the rail line extension to Byford, and modifications of the drains alongside Thomas Road. Additionally, it was made clear that the problems also stem from inadequate easement sumps in the area to the north of Kentucky Fields and a range of issues related to existing drainage. Cr Rob Coales (Shire President) led another discussion with the attendees. During this discourse, he made it clear that he and the Shire are well aware of this problem and are working with various stakeholders to address these issues.

The DDRA committed to continuing the collaboration with the Shire to facilitate addressing these matters, and will keep the community appropriately informed.

## Snapshot of Effort

As outlined in Slides 33 and 34 within the AGMPP presentation, DDRA volunteers have been hard at work to achieve the agreed objectives. This effort includes the provision of 2,161 hours of volunteer work during the 2023/24 Financial Year. If this effort were being provided by the Shire staff, it would equate to an additional cost to ratepayers of about \$170,731. Additionally, from 1 July 2024 to the day before the AGM, DDRA volunteers provided about 466 hours of effort, equivalent to about \$36,814 worth of work.

## The DDRA Strategic Development Plan

For this part of the AGM, Bruce Hilliard and Peter Benson explained the DDRA Strategic Development Plan (SDP) status and the works associated with, and proposed for, each workstream. The coverage of these issues is outlined in the following subsections.

### ***Workstreams***

The following points provide an outline of past, current and planned works for each workstream, which will be represented appropriately within the updated SDP:

- ***Workstream 1: Tracks and Trails.*** Issues related to WS1 are covered in Slides 37 to 43 of the AGMPP presentation. These include the following:
  - The refurbishment of the Slow Track is ongoing, with the last load for Phase 1 already procured and ready for spreading. Later phases of the slow track refurbishment will commence as required during this Financial Year.
  - The Shire has also allocated funding to implement the trail refurbishment effort outlined in the Business Case dated 19 February 2024. This work will include refurbishing the trails in the 70 Acres, a short section of the northwestern corner of Comic Loop, and parts of the Lord Fury trail.

- The trail surface in the chicanes will be refurbished during this Financial Year. This work will include those chicanes shown on Slide 40 of the AGMPP presentation. The refurbishment will be prioritised in terms of traffic in the area and the severity of the problem.
- The eastern crossover of the Birriga Drain will be refurbished and reset to overcome the erosion of the trail, and to provide an appropriate horse-friendly crossover/jump.
- **Workstream 2: Rest Areas.** Information on the project background and next stages of the rest area development was explained using AGMPP Slides 44 to 50. This part of the AGM included a short reminder of the Phase 1 (Evening Peal Court Carpark) implementation. It also covered the provision of the six plinths earlier in 2024 (see Slides 46 and 47), which will be used to mount the new/refurbished picnic tables. It was noted that the Shire had committed to pay for two of the new tables (see Slide 48) but this funding was not provided in the SoSJ budget. The refurbishment of one of the old wooden tables was also discussed.
- **Workstream 3: Car Park upgrade.** This workstream involves the placement of power poles around the car parks and associated vehicle tracks to delineate these more clearly. Most of this task has now been completed. The work around the Rain Lover Court carpark still needs to be finished and is intended to be completed during 2024. Replacing the existing posts in the northern Evening Peal carpark will be completed as resources are available.
- **Workstream 4: Vegetation Management.** Workstream 4 defines ongoing tasks associated with managing existing vegetation in the DDEP. This effort includes the removal of fallen branches, dead trees, and mowing. Many of these tasks are outlined in the Works Register. As explained during the AGM, a lot of work has been done on this workstream. Additional information on these tasks is covered in Slides 53 to 58 in the AGMPP presentation. In particular, the attendees were advised of the rapid response system that has been implemented, and they were asked to report problems through the DDRA Facebook Group so that the community is warned about problems and volunteers can be allocated to address each task as quickly as possible. Another key issue covered under this workstream related to the inability of the DDRA to burn collected vegetation (e.g. fallen branches/trees, etc.). This restriction has meant that the Shire is now obliged to mulch the collected vegetation. The resulting mulch is useful as it is distributed around the new plants (see WS5). However, doing this mulching is very expensive for the Shire, and the lack of resources means many branches and piles of vegetation sit un-mulched for long periods. The Shire is aiming to address this matter as a priority, so that the DDEP can be kept properly cleared consistently.
- **Workstream 5: New Vegetation.** The last hot, dry summer killed many trees and bushes in the 70 Acres. This native vegetation is needed to provide visual barriers (such as the eastern boundary of the 70 Acres). In July 2023, the DDRA planted around 2,100 new native bushes and plants to help fill vegetation barriers. However, despite the Shire watering these plants, about 30% died. In July of 2024, a further 616 native bushes/trees were planted. The DDRA would like to thank MetCONNx for providing those plants and associated materials. In addition to the planting, mulch was placed around many of these plants to help them be more water conserving and reduce weed buildup. It was also identified that watering the plants over summer was time-consuming and costly (in terms of wages costs) for the Shire. Consequently, the DDRA developed a Business Case to provide a drip watering system so that the new plants can be sustained next summer without the Shire needing to water them individually. An outline of the plan for this drip watering system is outlined on Slide 63 of the AGMPP presentation. Unfortunately, at the time of the AGM, the Shire

had not provided funding to cover either phase of this proposed development. The DDRA Committee advised that discussions with the Shire are ongoing.

- **Workstream 6: Gates and Fences.** Issues related to WS6 are outlined on Slides 65 to 72 of the AGMPP presentation. The key points discussed include the following:
  - Since the last AGM, the DDRA has implemented many rider-friendly gates, so they can be accessed while the rider remains mounted. The location of these gates is provided on Slide 65 of the AGMPP presentation.
  - Additionally, mounting blocks have been provided at the locations outlined on Slide 66 of the AGMPP presentation. It was requested that the mounting block in the Rain Lover Court carpark be moved closer to the arena to make it easier for floats to maneuver. It was agreed that this action would be undertaken by the DDRA as soon as it is practicable.
  - The safety fence at the crossover on the Comic Loop South trail (as shown on Slide 67 of the AGMPP presentation) will also be implemented before the end of 2024.
  - Two hitching rails will be provided in the 70 Acres. The proposed locations are shown on Slide 68 of the AGMPP presentation. It was agreed that these hitching posts will be installed as resources become available.
  - The fence/gate repairs listed on Slide 69 of the AGMPP presentation will be implemented before the end of 2024. In particular, the fence to the east of the 70 Acres needs to be repaired, and northern and southern rider-friendly gates will be installed. The planned repairs to this eastern fence and the provision of gates are illustrated on Slides 70 and 71 in the AGMPP presentation.
- **Workstream 7: Safety Control & Vehicular Access:** Safety controls on local roads were discussed using the information provided on Slides 73 to 78 in the AGMPP presentation. These issues included the following:
  - The speed limits on key roads such as Rain Lover Court and Masters Road were discussed. In particular, attendees expressed concerns about the existing speed limits on these roads and the increased amount of traffic that is likely to be experienced once Hopkinson Road is closed and Masters Road is connected to Mallarky Road at the roundabout on Thomas Road. The attendees requested that the DDRA and the Shire collaborate with Main Roads to address the risks by reducing the speed limit on these and other pertinent roads in the area.
  - It was explained that the Shire had committed to implementing a Pegasus crossing on Masters Road as soon as this is practicable. This crossing will allow horses to cross Masters Road between the Gurners East and Rain Lover trails. The DDRA will liaise with the Shire to facilitate this project being expedited.
  - The attendees expressed concern about providing a Pegasus crossing on Thomas Road. Many participants agreed that this might be a waste of money as very few people (if anyone) would use this crossing.
  - The design of the horse crossing on Wungong South Road was discussed and accepted as a viable solution to meet the current needs.
- **Workstream 8: Maintenance.** Workstream 8 is focused on maintaining facilities within the DDEP and also DDRA equipment. These activities are being coordinated through the Works Register. A

major enhancement managed through this workstream is focussed on refurbishing the southern arena in the 70 Acres. This project will include the recovery of sand blown out to the west and the re-laying/resurfacing the southern arena. It was also noted that this activity would include providing some form of windbreak on the eastern side of the arena to help minimise future wind erosion.

- **Workstream 10. Cross-Country Jumps.** During the first phase of this workstream, available power poles left over from Workstream 3 will be used to replace or create new cross-country jumps in the 70 Acres area (Reserve R35701). Additionally, the tyre jumps on the eastern side of the 70 Acres area will be refurbished. After this work is completed, the DDRA will continue rationalising, creating, procuring, replacing or upgrading the existing jumps. Consequently, this will be an ongoing workstream focussed on enhancing the cross-country jumping facilities.
- **Workstream 11. DDRA Shed Upgrades.** The DDRA shed had a major upgrade from December 2023 to February 2024. Firstly, the floor of the shed and covered area were concreted, which makes the area much more usable. This task was completed with funding provided by the Shire, and the DDRA would like to thank the SoSJ for this support. Additionally, a range of important upgrades were implemented using DDRA funds. These activities included procuring racking, rubber matting for the floor, cupboards, and other fittings. Our team also properly sealed the roof and walls to stop dust and leaves from blowing into the shed. These changes, make the area much more usable and will help to ensure that the equipment can be maintained more effectively.
- **Workstream 12. Signage.** This workstream was discussed using the information on Slides 86 to 90 in the AGMPP presentation. The key issues covered in this part of the meeting were as follows:
  - Access Guidance Signage (AGS) has been fitted at all main accessways to the DDEP in the locations shown on Slide 86 of the AGMPP presentation. Eugenie Kestel recommended adding another symbol towards the top of each AGS showing a horse being ridden with a green circle around this. The intent is to show that horses should have right of way. It was agreed during the meeting that this change would be investigated.
  - The new information sign shown on Slide 87 in the AGMPP presentation was discussed. It was agreed that the current QR code needed to be replaced on the existing sign in the Evening Peal carpark. Additionally, two additional signs need to be procured and installed in the locations shown on that slide.
  - The trail signage design outlined on Slide 88 will be finalised as soon as possible, so that funding can be coordinated and the project implemented by the end of the 24/25 FY.
  - The attendees were advised that the DDEP trail names have now been listed in Google Maps and Apple Maps. Attendees were also reminded that they can now use these trail names when talking to emergency services, as this information is now available to them.

### **Resolution**

After the preceding discussion, the members voted on the following resolution:

To accept the updated report on the implementation of the DDRA Strategic Development Plan and the new works discussed and agreed upon during this AGM.

Proposed by: Adam Kestel  
Seconded by: Peter Cappendell  
Vote outcome: **Carried unanimously**

## Present/consider the Committee's Annual Report

The link to the Committee's report was provided with the notification for the AGM, and copies of the report were also provided to attendees. This report included progress information and thanked everyone who assisted. These issues were discussed in more detail before taking the vote on the following resolution.

### Resolution

To accept the DDRA Committee's Report.

Proposed by: Matt Emmerly

Seconded by: Carol Fawcett

Vote outcome: *Carried unanimously*

Bruce Hilliard and Peter Benson also formally thanked all of the volunteers who had provided the support during the year. A formal honorary DDRA Honorary member certificate was also presented to Mrs Penny Ellis in recognition of her many years of service.

## Treasurers Report

The Treasurer (Carol Fawcett) presented an updated report on the finances of the DDRA. The following two tables provide the financial statements for the two DDRA accounts as of 30 July 2024.

<b>Funds in working account 1 July 2023</b>	\$ 2,354.33
<b>Income/Revenue</b>	
Revenue received from the beginning of FY	\$ <b>17,550.00</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Total Expenditure to date	\$ <b>19,709.56</b>
Bank Fees	\$ 22.80
Bridle Path/ Track Improvements	\$ 5,596.27
Cross Country Improvement	\$ 2,150.00
Rest Area	\$ 168.65
Shed Upgrade	\$ 1,909.02
Fuel	\$ 1,893.12
Equipment & tools	\$ 852.20
Support Costs	\$ 922.57
Insurance	\$ 2,089.88
Tractor/Equipment & Maintenance	\$ 3,155.94
Web Site	\$ 949.11
Balance at bank working account 30 June 2024	\$ 194.77

<b>Funds in WS20 1 July 23</b>	<b>\$ 1,747.86</b>
<b>Income/Revenue</b>	
Interest received	\$ 26.93
Advertising/sponsors	\$ 750.00
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Nil	
Closing balance at bank on 30 June 2024	\$ 2,524.79

The following two tables provide a snapshot of the financial position of the DDRA on 29 August 2024.

<b>Funds in working account 1 July 2024</b>	<b>\$ 194.77</b>
<b>Income/Revenue</b>	
Revenue received from beginning of FY to date	\$ 17,605.00
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Total Expenditure to date	\$ 1,241.82
WS0: Bank Fees	\$ 2.40
WS0: Insurance	\$
WS1: Bridle Path/ Track Improvements	\$
WS 2: Rest Area	\$
WS 4/WS8: Fuel	\$ 225.52
WS4/WS5/WS8: Support Costs	\$
WS4/WS5/WS8: Equipment & tools	\$ 189.00
WS8: Tractor/Mower Equip & Maintenance	\$ 757.70
WS10: Cross Country Improvements	\$
WS11: Shed Upgrade	\$
WS20: Web Site	\$
Balance for working account 29 Aug 2024	\$ 16,555.55



<b>Funds in WS20 Account 1 July 24</b>	<b>\$ 2,524.79</b>
<b>Income/Revenue</b>	
Interest received	\$ 6.10
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Nil	\$
Closing balance at bank 29 Aug 2024	\$ 2,530.89

As shown in these balances, at the time of the AGM, the DDRA had \$19,086.44 for allocation to the various workstreams.

The attendees were advised that they could access the budget on request, and Bruce Hilliard advised that this document will be updated as a part of the development of the updated Strategic Development Plan.

**Resolution**

Having discussed the Treasurer’s report, the attending members were asked to vote on the following resolution:

To accept the DDRA Treasurers Report.

Proposed by: Brian Vale  
 Seconded by: Matt Emery  
 Vote outcome: *Carried unanimously*

**Election of Committee Members**

At this meeting, the previous Secretary stood down and was replaced by Pam Hilliard without another member standing for that role. There were no other volunteers to take on any of the officeholder roles. Therefore, the other members of the previous Committee remained in their current positions. Additionally, the top six members in the following table’s right-hand column indicated they would continue their roles. One new member (John-Paul Chabros) volunteered to join the Committee.

Officeholders		Other Committee Members
President	Bruce Hilliard	Brian Vale Robyn Vale Amanda Smith Dave Emery Matt Emery Eugenie Kestel John-Paul Chabros (new member)
Vice President	Peter Benson	
Secretary	Pam Hilliard	
Treasurer	Carol Fawcett	

**Resolution**

To accept the nominees to become members of the DDRA Committee for a period of up to three years (as per RoA Clause 11.4(2)).

Proposed by: Bruce Hilliard

Seconded by: Penny Ellis

Vote outcome: *Carried unanimously*

**General Business**

There was no other general business raised.

**Meeting Closed**

The meeting closed at 9.27 pm.

To the best of my recollection, I attest that these Minutes accurately reflect the proceedings during and outcomes of this AGM. However, in accordance with the DDRA Rules of Association, these minutes must still be accepted at a following General Meeting as part of the ratification process.

*Signed as an attestation by the Chairperson for the meeting.*

Name: Bruce Hilliard      Role: Chairperson & President