

MERRI CREEK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS

BRIEF OUTCOMES REPORT

JULY 2001

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**Merri Creek Management Committee
Stakeholder Consultation Outcomes Report**

Introduction

This brief outcomes report has been documented following separate stakeholder and staff consultations.

Eighteen people attended the Stakeholder session. Working in small groups and through a structured process they reviewed the MCMC:

- Primary purpose (s)
- Rules and Membership
- Structure and Operational Issues
- Stakeholder Relationships & Future Directions

The Staff session specifically addressed:

- Primary Purpose (s)
- Structure and Operational Issues

Staff also did a SWOT analysis including a brief scanning of issues to be addressed by MCMC.

This report addresses the issues identified by the consultations by making a summary finding. It then briefly identifies the key issues in each of the areas considered by participants, makes a supporting recommendation and notes the expected outcomes resulting from the recommendation. As a brief outcomes report it does not provide detailed discussion.

Stakeholder discussion and comments are recorded in Appendix 1

Staff views and discussion is documented in Appendix 2.

Summary Findings

MCMC as a recognised pioneer has achieved significant outcomes and is a repository of invaluable knowledge, experience and skills. However in reviewing the issues from the consultations, it is clear that there are a number of fundamental organisational issues to address in order for MCMC to move forward confidently into the future.

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MCMC lacks a shared future direction, has a complex multi tiered structure, supported by complex membership rules, accompanied by some communication challenges and confusion about roles, decision making and delegation.

It is timely for MCMC to comprehensively review its constitutional structure, purpose and role, membership, stakeholder relationships and organisational structure in the process of determining its future directions.

Without a strategic review and repositioning of MCMC with clarity of direction, focus, a supporting organisation structure and transparent processes, MCMC risks losing momentum and support.

The opinions, issues and suggestions provided by participants in the consultations provide the basis for moving forward and addressing what needs to be done (see appendix 1 & 2) and includes building on MCMC considerable strengths. This does not overlook what has been achieved, but rather recognises that the critical issues for MCMC to address in 2001 and beyond are a result of being successful and the need to take stock, review and plan for the future.

The challenge for the Committee is not to lose sight of but to build on past achievements, recognising the changing and different challenges of today and tomorrow. This requires a comprehensive review of current position, openness to change and to strategically plan for the future.

Disclaimer

This Report has been developed in good faith and is based on information from MCMC consultations. The Consultant has analysed the information and exercised judgement in developing this Brief Report. It is the responsibility of MCMC to apply its judgement in accepting or rejecting the Report which neither in part or in its entirety can be deemed to guarantee success. The results or actions taken as result of this Report are the sole responsibility of MCMC.



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1. Primary Purposes

Key Issues:

- The Statement of Primary Purpose is dominated by the seven supporting purposes
- Broad scope of the purposes means MCMC risks taking on too much given lack of agreed focus
- Some confusion about what is core and non core business
- There are no shared strategic directions nor a strategic plan to deliver the purposes according to agreed focus and priorities resulting in:
 - Conflicting views between individual members and MCMC about purpose
 - Members not sufficiently involved in debate about primary purposes and subsequent policy and strategy decisions
 - Some members questioning current scope ie. MCMC has gone beyond its scope
 - No clear statement about MCMC taking a proactive role in addressing issues
- Gap in the Primary Purposes and MCMC connections with CALP, YCIC and YCAP
- Rural part of creek not included
- Other issues related to land use planning, public access, storm water, catchment planning appear to be omitted given there is no strategy to spell out strategic priorities relating to the purposes
- Some gaps in systematic demonstration of outcomes against primary purposes
- If MCMC has a regional approach " and the wider metropolitan area" should be deleted
- Community Participation - add "and other appropriate organisations within the catchment"

Supporting Recommendations:

Review Primary Purposes to ensure relevance and currency

Determine direction, focus and priorities and document in a three-year Strategic Plan

Required Outcomes:

- Purpose and scope of MCMC and core business confirmed
- Strategic directions, focus, priorities agreed and documented in a three year MCMC plan
- Interrelationship between and priorities of primary purposes clarified
- MCMC stakeholder relationships in delivering primary purposes identified and managed
- Policy development mechanisms established to develop MCMC public policy positions in the context of the diversity of individual member organisation views and policy positions

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- Statement of Purpose redeveloped and delivered through an agreed strategic plan

2. Rules and Membership

Key Issues:

- Membership rules complicated and not well known
- Membership and revenue interdependent
- Members unclear about actual decision making structures and processes eg. roles and boundaries of the Management Committee, Executive and Subcommittees
- Participation by member organisations challenging - lack of continuity of involvement, communication channels not always effective for MCMC
- Subcommittees offer broad participation by members but participation ad hoc and linkages to Committee decisions not always clear
- Exec committee perceived to lack balance in member representation
- Resignation process cumbersome and unrealistic in aim to protect revenue base
- No clear mechanisms for developing agreed policy positions with member conflict resolution processes for dealing with policy differences and public position
- Fundamental questioning of the appropriateness of the current MCMC mode in 2001 and beyond

Supporting Recommendations:

Address the relationship between membership and revenue

Review member participation

Review and Simplify Membership Structure and Rules

Required Outcomes:

- Purpose of membership redeveloped
- Relationship between membership and revenue / funding issues clarified
- Membership basis broadened and simplified, including membership processes
- Policy development mechanisms redeveloped
- MCMC membership model current and workable in complex policy environment
- Roles, decision making processes clarified
- Revenue sources clarified and secured

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3. Stakeholder Relationships

Key Issues:

- Conflict between MCMC and member positions regarding policy and strategy
- Role of State government in MCMC is unclear
- Relationships with other MC stakeholders ad hoc
- No MCMC policy for dealing with conflict of interests with its membership
- No transparent policy process for consulting members, developing agreed policy positions and determining public position on issues
- No formal communication strategy

Supporting Recommendation:

Stakeholder Communication and Management Strategy implemented

Required Outcomes:

- Stakeholder and member relationships proactively managed and conflicts resolved
- Stakeholder consultation processes established
- Policy for dealing with members' conflict of interests clearly defined
- Processes for developing MCMC policy and public position on strategic issues established and clearly communicated
- Stakeholder communication strategy implemented and monitored for effectiveness

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4. Future Directions

Key Issues

- Lack of clarity regarding MCMC strategic directions, focus, priorities, agreed strategy
- Need to clarify core business in the context of the external operating environment
- Lack of financial strategy including security of revenue base, investment /fundraising strategy
- Need to develop a regional approach and work with all stakeholders
- Need to build on staff expertise and develop staff role in relation to strategic directions
- Role of volunteers and volunteer policy incomplete

Supporting Recommendation:

Determine direction, focus and priorities and document in a three-year Strategic Plan

Required Outcomes:

- Strategic directions identified, agreed and communicated to all stakeholders
- MCMC clear about direction, focus, priorities, agreed strategy
- Revenue streams identified, secured
- Fundraising strategy (including development of Gift Fund) developed and implemented
- Three year financial plan developed and implemented
- Partnerships, alliances identified and developed
- MCMC resourced to ensure capacity to deliver strategic directions
- Operations informed by strategic priorities
- Employment conditions reviewed and future requirements identified
- Strategic plan documented implemented and monitored for progress
- Staff expertise and role utilised and supported
- Role of volunteers clear

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5. Structure

Key Issues

- Role and boundaries between membership, governance and operations unclear
- Structural fit with current scope of MCMC role and operations questionable
- Complex multi tiered Committee / Subcommittee and operational structure for a small organisation

- Decision making structures, delegations and authority of the Committee, Exec, Subcommittees and Manager requires clarity
- Operational structure appears 'stressed' - staff concerns with position descriptions, communication and conditions
- Performance expectations and measurement required and aligned with strategic priorities
- Communication challenging in current structural arrangements
- Role of volunteers with accompanying policy requires development

Supporting Recommendation:

MCMC Structure be reviewed in the context of strategic directions

Required Outcomes:

- Strategy determines MCMC structure to deliver directions and priorities
- MCMC structure simplified to ensure organisational effectiveness and efficiency, supported by constitutional changes
- Structure supports role and is sufficiently resourced for task
- Roles of the Executive, Sub Committees and Management be clarified and streamlined
- Staff role, position descriptions, salary clarified
- Performance expectations clear and measured
- Communication strategy (internal and external) developed and implemented
- Volunteer policy and role developed
- Change management process implemented