

Report on BIEN Priorities and Projects Workshop January 30th, 2016

Thirty people participated in this workshop, which was aimed at giving BIEN members an opportunity to consider what the network's priorities and possible new projects should be in the light of the organization having substantial new funds available to it. The participants responded vigorously and in good spirit to the various activities, and as a result we have a lot to work with.

1. Results of Brainstorming Session

Following a guided visualisation of Bruny Island and the human and natural activity within it, participants were asked to consider what an environmental network could do that would be beneficial to the island as a whole. The following suggestions for future action, organized into broad categories, were made:

a. A Vision for Bruny – for Residents and Visitors

- Develop and articulate BIEN's vision for Bruny Island
- Obtain local community support for this vision
- Promote awareness of the natural values of Bruny
- Provide visitor information on natural values on ferry tickets.
- Provide guidance on respectful wildlife viewing for visitors.

b. Sustainable Industry Development on the Island

Tourism

- Co-ordinated tourist and event management
- Implement bed tax
- A quota system on bed numbers

Forestry

- Foster a vibrant and sustainable forestry industry (based largely on pines?)

Fishing

- Advocate low pollution fish farming
- Increase wild fish numbers (marine reserves?)

Articulation of Conservation Livelihoods on the Island

c. Integrated Environmental Management

- Prevention of land clearing on private and public land
- Marine environment management (climate change response, reduction in rubbish from fish farms etc, controls on black water dumping)
- Work towards a weed-free Bruny, with particular reference to pine trees.
- Integrated management of the beach environment, with strict controls on vehicles and on dogs. Removal of plastic and rope from beaches and greater control of point sources of waste.
- Better management of rubbish on Bruny, with an aim for a plastic-bag-free Bruny.
- Island-wide wildfire hazard management.

d. Biodiversity and the Biosphere

- Pursue the Bruny Biosphere project with vigour.
- Develop threatened species action plans for those species on Bruny for which plans do not yet exist, and facilitate the carrying-out of these actions.
- Vigorously pursue feral animal control, especially cats.
- Develop road kill actions plans.

e. Transport

- Provide a solar-powered bus and other appropriate forms of public transport on Bruny.
- Construct a beachside walking track from Coal Point into Adventure Bay.

f. Relationship-building

- Develop co-operative partnerships with conservation-oriented landholders, with particular reference to the Tasmanian Land Conservancy.
- Foster dialogue with those families who have been resident on the island for many generations.

g. The Neck as Nexus.

The Bruny Island Neck is a particular place where all the above issues impinge on a small area: Biodiversity (penguins, shearwaters); feral animal problem (cats); Transport (the need for traffic calming); visitor numbers in summer; road kill of penguins; beach environmental management; heritage (the Truganini memorial); involvement of the creative arts (the Edge2 exhibition) and so on.

2. Identification of Specific Projects

When all these possible future actions were displayed in the front of the room, participants discussed them in small groups, and were then asked to identify two specific projects they would most like to see BIEN undertake in the near future. For each project, they were asked to specify the overall aim, the initial project to move towards that aim, and a budget if possible. These project ideas were written on Post-it notes and placed on the walls so that participants could read them all and cast three 'votes' for the projects they supported the most.

It should not be implied that a suggestion that received no votes was without support. It means that one of the 30 attendees thought it was sufficiently important, having considered all the issues that had been brainstormed, to be listed as one of two projects they put forward.

45 projects were identified, but there were many overlaps or duplications. In order of the number of 'votes' received, these were:

1a. Aim: Identify and Record the Natural Values of Bruny (why Bruny is so special).

Project: As visitors enter the island at the ferry terminal, provide them with attractive and high quality information (in the major visitor languages) on Bruny's natural values. Use this information and visitor feedback to pressure

local government, National Parks and tourism operators to protect these natural values. (8 votes).

Very closely related to this were:

1b. Aim: Manage the effect of tourism on Bruny (rubbish, camping, road kill, toilets etc).

Project: Develop an 'app' for all Bruny visitors to provide guidance on visiting Bruny Island (7 votes)

1c. Aim: Educate visitors about their options and responsibilities on Bruny

Project: Scope business and Council for support to develop a smart phone app. and signage.

Budget: \$10,000. (5 votes)

1d. Aim: Increase visitor awareness (respect for the environment and locals, natural values)

Project: Prepare pamphlets and electronic 'apps' (3 votes)

1e. Aim: To educate visitors prior to, or at least at the time of their buying a ferry ticket, about enjoying and protecting the Bruny environment and wildlife.

Project: Produce a document available on-line and given with ferry ticket. Make existing brochures, such as endangered animal sheets, available at the Kettering info centre, airport and Spirit arrival lounge. (2 votes).

1f. Aim: Inform tourists of important information regarding Bruny.

Project: Produce information packs that are sufficiently interesting that people retain them rather than discard them. (2 votes).

1g. Aim: Tourist management

Project: Educate visitors on respect for wildlife and the Bruny environment, (1 vote)

1h. Aim: Responsible wildlife viewing

Projects: i. A welcome sign with information on wildlife and how to be a considerate visitor. Similar information on free maps and paid advertisements.

ii. Develop a wildlife app. for smart phones (0 votes).

1i. Aim: Tourist education (0 votes)

The total vote for these similar projects was 28 votes.

Partially related to these ideas was

1j. Project: Tourist information walkway at Adventure Bay with signage on wildlife, Aboriginal and settler history, children's drawings, photographs, etc. (4 votes).

2a. Aim: Litter and rubbish control (including marine)

Projects: Adequate bins at strategic visitor spots.

Enforcement of littering fines. (5 votes)

Closely related to this was

2b. Aim: A plastic bag-free Bruny
Project: Investigate the precedents from other communities such as Coles Bay. 'Very do-able and low cost'. (4 votes)

2c. Aim: To have low marine pollution
Project: Have a plastic bag-free Bruny Island (1 vote)

2d. Aim: Manage fish farm rubbish.
Projects: Approach fish farms via email and meetings to: i. Clean up exiting rubbish; ii. Stop rubbish from entering environment (secure rubbish bins and on-board articles); iii. Develop education programs for employees; iv. No rope offcuts to be discarded; v. Secure all plastic swarf, pipework, kitchen waste etc
Budget: Minimal. (2 votes)

2e. Aim: A cleaner marine environment
Project: Provide dumps for yachting and boating fraternity. (1 vote).

2f. Aim: Improved water quality in Barnes Bay
Projects: i. Determine pollution from fish farms. ii. Determine effect of all waterways to the Bay being dammed. (1 vote)

The total vote for these similar projects was 14 votes.

3a. Aim: Articulate a vision for Bruny and seek community endorsement
Project: Create a BIEN subcommittee to produce a draft vision statement for consideration by BIEN members. (7 votes)

Closely related to this was

3b. Aim: A long-term vision for the island.
Project: Identify the ways in which the island is
- Naturally beautiful
- Environmentally pure (clean air, water and land)
- A perfect place to live. (2 votes)

3c. Aim: To create a long-term community driven plan for Bruny.
Project: Scope business, community groups, NRM, Council for buy-in.
Budget: \$10,000. (1 vote).

The total vote for these similar projects was 10 votes.

4a. Aim: Control Radiata pines on the island, with Killora as an initial case study.
Project: Employ a consultant to develop and arrange implementation of an action plan.
Budget: \$10,000. (5 votes).

Closely related to this was

4b. Aim: Pine eradication (2 votes).
The total vote for these similar projects was 7 votes.

5a. Aim: Advance the Biosphere Reserve proposal.
Project: Prepare a Biodiversity Plan for the island.
Budget: \$5,000 – \$10,000. (6 votes).

Closely related to this was

5b. Aim: Develop Biodiversity Plan.
Project: Feral animal and weed control; respect for natural values (0 votes).

6. Aim: Control of weeds on public roads
Project: Force Council to control weeds on roadsides, which is their land. (4 votes).

7. Aim: Cat Control
Projects: i. Voluntary de-sexing of cats, microchipping; ii. Mobile vet clinic offering cheap service (funded by BIEN?) (3 votes).

Closely related to this was

7b. Aim: Cat control (1 vote).

The total votes for these similar projects was 4 votes.

8. Project: Add a \$2 surcharge to visitors cost to come onto the island (ferry ticket?), presumably to offset the damage done by increasing visitor numbers (2 votes).

9. Aim: People management (possibly visitor management?) (2 votes)

10. Project: Put a long-term cap on the number of visitors by land and sea.
Rationale: It adds value to the asset (the island environment); it is doable; there are precedents; and there are economic, environmental and social advantages. (2 votes).

11. Aim: Controlled development on the island.
Project: Formulate a Bruny Island building code. (2 votes).

12. (by email) Aim: Improve visitor infrastructure.
Project: Form a Wildcare Group – Friends of BI Walking Tracks. (Parks is underfunded regarding track maintenance, and there are many good walks outside the National Park). (1 vote).

13. Aim: Education program (1 vote)

There were two other specific education aims (which received no votes):

- Education of younger people at school
- Educate the 4th generation locals.

The following issues and projects did not receive any votes, but are still well worth noting:

a) Aim: Control of traffic flow. Speed limits of 80 km on the island, 40 km at the Neck to reduce road kill.

b) See Rosemary Sandford's article in the Mercury, ['Bruny Island: Loved to Death?'](#) and the suggestions therein.

c) by email) Aim: To have larger scale alternative energy supplies designed to make Bruny Island energy independent (eg., windpower).

d) Aim: BIEN to set up a series of working groups to identify actions and implement them. Projects: Tourism; Wildlife Management; Weed Management; Transport; Community Engagement; and Education.

e) Aim: Weed control.

f) Project: Use Lutregala Marsh as a case study for feral cat management. Expand to covenanted properties.

g) Aim: Liaise with local government to build relationships.

h) Aim: Reduce the number of vehicles on Bruny roads. Project: Explore the potential for public transport to meet ferries. Develop economically attractive plan to bring in an operator. Budget: \$10,000.

i) Aim: To improve long-term bird monitoring. Project: Property owners undertake sound recordings as a first step in establishing statewide bird monitoring long-term.

j) Aim: Planning for low environmental impact development for industry.

3. Where to from here.

In the long term this document will hopefully serve as a resource for BIEN for the future, to refer back to for general ways for BIEN to proceed and for ideas for projects. It also gives a picture of our priorities at this point in BIEN's history (though votes may have been awarded either for the importance of the overall aim, or for the practicality and achievability of the specific project. Note that many of the 'projects' were very generally worded and therefore hard to assess.).

In the short term, given BIEN's current funding situation, we need next to consider the priority that Louise herself might have wished to give to future expenditures, since her bequest makes up the bulk of the funds now at our disposal.

I suggest the following way to proceed:

1. This report is circulated to BIEN members well before the meeting at the end of this month, so that everyone can consider the list of specific projects and the implied priorities assigned to them in the workshop.
2. At the meeting, we review the projects and implied priorities, discuss them, clarify the proposals, modify them where necessary and generally

refine them.

3. We discuss our personal and collective understanding of what Louise's wishes and priorities might have been, and examine the list of possible projects in this light.
4. We include in our considerations the current statement of aims of BIEN and how any future priorities and projects relate to those.
5. If time permits, develop more detail and potential budgets for the project or short list of projects selected, or at least appoint a subgroup to undertake this task.

John Cameron
13th February, 2016